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The Primitive Institution,

OR,

A Seasonable DISCOURSE OF CATECHIZING.

Wherein is shewn,

The ANTIQUITY, BENEFITS and NECESSITY thereof:

TOGETHER

With its Suitableness to heal the present Distempers of this National CHURCH.

BY

LANCELOT ADDISON,
One of his Majesties Chaplains in Ordinary.

LONDON, Printed by *J. C.* for *William Crook*, at the *Green Dragon* without *Temple-Bar*. 1674.

TO

The Right Reverend Father in God,

SETH,

Lord Bishop of Sarum.

TO

The Right Reverend Father in God,

SETH,

Lord Bishop of *Sarum*.

My LORD,

YOur Name is here prefixed to the ensuing Discourse, neither for *Charm* nor *Amulet*, to save it from the Rude and Censorious; for it doth not at all regard what Entertainment it meets with at such hands. But it assumes this Honour upon the account of its Author, who having the happiness to be one of

your Diocesan Clergy, thinks all he can perform in that Relation, ought to be devoted to your Lordship, as a sincere Testimony of his bounden acknowledging your Paternal Government.

I need not represent to your Lordship the many and great Evils which are befaln this Church, through a want of duly observing what this Discourse commends. For as your *Singular Prudence* labours to redress, and your *Pious Soul* deeply resents them; so your *Great Discernment* plainly sees that they are

scarce

scarce (now) to be removed by any other Method, but a timely, diligent and *Regular Catechizing*. And that the most likely means to establish Truth and Holiness with *Posterity*, is firmly and early to imprint the *Yonger minds*, who are the hopes of Religion, with that Catechism, wch our Church out of her singular prudence and affection hath provided for them.

But I may not pursue this, lest I should too much faulter in the Laws of Dedication; which oblige me to admire and praise that Apostolical

lical care, prudence, candor, and severity which are eminent in your Lordships Government; and which I dare scarce name, for fear I should offend that *Heroick Modesty* and *lowliness* so conspicuous in your *Great Conduct*. Besides, I am so averse to the usual Modes of Dedication, that I cannot comply with them in any thing, unless in my hearty prayers for your Lordships *Good Health*, and *long life*; and in testifying to the world that I am

MY LORD,

Your Lordships most humble and most devoted Servant

Jnc. Addison.

TO THE READER.

THE *Condition of this ſmall* Treatiſe *is ſo little agreeable to the preſent Genius of the Age, that there needs no great Sagacity to foretel its Entertainment. But thoſe who value Books not by their Dreſs and Faſhion, but Matter and Uſefulneſs; and who look not ſo much upon what will* take *with* a corrupt Generation, *as help to* amend it; *when they maturely weigh the Subject and Deſigne of the* Enſuing Papers, *inſtead of* cenſuring, *will be ready to* reſent *the weak management of ſo concern-*

ing a Theme, and pity to see it fall into the hands of so unskilful an Artificer.

For which this is the only Apology, *That what is here written, was not intended for* Perfection, *but* Essay; *and that it had never left its retirement, had it not been* forced *thence by* impulse *of the* present Necessity. *For it is too evident, that this is a* Season *which not only warrants, but exacts our greatest endeavours to perswade to such things as may beget, restore, and establish* Truth *and* Union *among us. And that* Catechizing *by a more peculiar Energy is thereunto subservient, appears upon this account, that the* Church *in all Ages has used it to that purpose.*

The raising up of which Institution *(so disastrously fall in our Borders) in hopes of the great*

edifi-

edification which thereby will accrew into this Church, *as it was the first motive of this* Essay, *so it is the last Designe; for which I shall think my self largely recompenc'd, if by this contributed* Mite, *I may provoke the more able to cast richer gifts into the same* Corban.

If what I now write of were to be backt with the Example either of professed Infidels, *or* Romanists, *I could from a long* Conversation with both *produce their unwearied care in* Catechizing. *To which I ever thought the paucity of Converts both from* Infidelity *and* Romanism *ought chiefly to be* imputed.

The Mahumetans (*as in another Discourse I have observed*) *have their* Mustadarif, *out of which the younger sort are trained up in the* Principles *of a* Mussulman.

Mussulman. *And the* Jews Sepher Chinnuck and Sepher Ikkarim *yield sufficient attestation that they are no* Truands *in this* School.

The Romanists *from being our* Rivals *in this particular, are become our* Masters; *for not only the* Jesuites, *but also other* Religious, *glory to have made* Catechizing *their* Profession; *only with this difference, That the* Jesuits Catechize *the* rich *and* ingenious, *and* other Orders *the* poor *and* dull. *But their* Diligence *herein first sprang from an imitation of* ours. *For till on* Sundays *and* Holy-days *we both preach'd in the* Morning, *and* Catechiz'd *in the* Afternoon, *the* Papists *did neither. And it was undeniably happy with the* Protestant Religion, *when diligent Catechizing was the chief Engine imployed to supplant*

plant Popery, *and give deeper roots to the* Reformation.

But Catechizing (*as all things else, whereof* humane *weakness hath the Custody and* Government) *is greatly faln from that* Observation *which it had once in this* Church; *yet methinks if nothing else, this alone should provoke us to a little more diligence in this* excellent Institution, *to see our* Adversaries *manage it to our* reproach *and damage.*

But, Reader, in mercy to your Patience, *I will only add, That the* Author *is none of those who impose upon others what they will not do themselves; for he is a constant Labourer in that* Vineyard, *wherein he desires his Brethren to take a little more* Pains.

Next, *That he is really of Opinion, the* Minister *may sleep with a good* Conscience *of having well dis-*

discharged his Duty, *when every* Lords-day, *he observes (as he is bound) the* Churches 59 Canon. *And as for those who do otherwise, he leaves them to the* Reflections *of their own* Brests.

THE

THE Primitive Inſtitution.

The INTRODUCTION.

THat in the ſame Church and Nation, there ſhould be no leſs Oſtentation and Noiſe of Religion and Holineſs among ſome, than of Profaneſs and Impiety among others, will prove a matter of no great wonder to ſuch as duly enquire into the cauſes of both. Eſpecially when it is conſidered, that as Ignorance may be the Mother of blinde Devotion, ſo it may

be likewiſe of deſperate Preſumption; becauſe all iniquity among men proceeds from the want of a right knowledge of God. And as the foundation of all true Happineſs, and of all true Religion, which is the proper means of attaining it, grows from a right opinion touching things Divine; ſo the miſapprehenſion thereof is the ground of all miſery, and of all thoſe vices by which it is occaſion'd.

But that which may juſtly awaken in us a greater wonder, is, to ſee all thoſe methods proving ineffectual which have been ſo powerfully manag'd for the removal of this pernicious miſapprehenſion; and that we ſhould be ſtill as much under the ſame diſtempers both in judgement and manners, as if nothing had been adminiſtred for the cure of

of either. That our own Church in this Age (which for its wickedneſs ſeems to be the laſt) doth make careful proviſion both for the preſent & future welfare of her Children, is a truth apparent to all that with unprejudiced minds peruſe her holy Offices, Catechiſm, Articles, Homilies, Rubricks, and Canons. For how meanly ſoever ſome may think hereof, yet if they were once throughly conſidered in their circumſtances, we ſhall find that ſuch a prudent and affectionate care is taken therein, that both our opinions and lives may be duly informed and regulated, as in no Church of a particular Denomination can be parallel'd. So that it cannot but be admired, how any of this Church ſhould be either *Vicious*, or *Erroneous*; conſidering that there is nothing wanting, on the

Churches part, that may keep our Actions Vertuous, and Sentiments Orthodox.

But as in matters of the *Civil State*, many evils arise from a neglect, or remiss execution of those Laws which are appointed to prevent and suppress them: So in the Church, a lack of seeing her Institutions duly observed, when there wanted no circumstances to exact it, may claim a large share in her present Disorders. For, the letting of Discipline be too loose, emboldenʼd not a few to break it. However, leaving the mischiefs that accrue from this, and the unhandsome and cold celebration of the *Divine-Service*; the neglect of guiding Sermons by the Articles; the almost utter disusage of the Homilies; the lame observance of the Rubricks, and

sleight

sleight execution of the Canons of the Church: leaving, I say, these for the Animadversion of others, I shall only take notice, that the Omission, or lazy and luke-warm use of Catechizing, ought to be blam'd, for much of that Viciousness and *error*, which is so sadly visible both in conversation and Judgement. And I am deeply ingaged in this perswasion, that till publick Catechizing fall under a diligent, constant, and unanimous practice, there is but little likelihood of ever seeing that Union and Holiness, Peace and Truth, flourish in this Church, for which she was once so famous.

Now that those to whom the great charge of Souls is consigned, may be awaken'd to a little more vigor and diligence in Catechizing, and that they would

ſhake off that Supineneſs, which in this caſe they cannot retain, but to the aggravation of their own guilt, and the encreaſe of the Churches miſery; And that every ſtation of men, moved with the ſenſe of *Duty* and *Emolument*, may contribute to the raiſing up of the faln practice of Catechizing, is the deſigne and aim of the enſuing Diſcourſe: wherein no Method at all was projected, but every thing ſpoken to as it freely offer'd it ſelfe. And as for *ends*, the Searcher of hearts knows, there was none other purpoſed in the publication hereof, but Gods Glory, and the Edification of his Church.

Chap. I.

Of Catechizing. Its name, use Secular and Religious.

And the first thing that comes to be spoken of concerning Catechizing, is its Name. And I the rather chuse to begin here, because that the true notice of the Name, will help us to that of the thing. Now that there is a peculiar force and significancy in words, and that we cannot thereof be safely ignorant, is but too evident by those many errours that have in all Ages risen from meer Verbal Mistakes. And therefore if we could once be so happy as to find out the true importance of words, and to hit

upon such an agreement between them and things, as not to cloud in speech, what is clear in Nature, but plainly to express things as they are in themselves; that then one great cause of error, in all sorts of Learning, would be removed: for it is an observation that will not quickly be antiquated, That the confounding those things in Language, which in their nature are distinct, and the expressing of different matters by the same, or words of near affinity and likeness, hath in all Sciences been a fruitful Mother of erroneous apprehensions.

And this is also plain in the affairs of Religion, in which not only a perverse mistake in old words, but a liberty of introducing new, has ever proved fatal, and destructive: For out of *new words*, New opinions insensibly creep

creep into the Church, and with Age grow too strong for her Discipline: which being foreseen by the Holy *Nicene* Fathers, it moved them to *decree* against the use of such words in matters of Faith, as were not easily to be deduced from, or directly found in sacred Scripture. *Socrat.* lib. 1. c. 6. And upon the same account *Tertullian* would not have our Ears accustom'd to *New words. Adverſ. Hæret. Cap.* 16. And for the like reason St. *Basil* could not be induced to forgo one *Iota* in the old form, when he was sollicited by the *Arians.* A cautiousness which we may conceive, was wisely made use of by those *Reverend Persons*, through whose means, by Gods blessing, we enjoy our Religion in its present Reformation: For we find that they had

an especial care not to innovate in *words* or *forms*, when they could with due security retain the old. And to instance in what has nearest affinity with our present Subject, we see that they have styled that Breviary of Religion, which they compiled, or rather collected out of the best and most ancient Models of that kinde, by the name of *Catechism*. Which in its general notice signifies a familiar and easie method of instilling the rudiments of any Art, Science or Faculty. Which being done by a frequent repetition of same thing, Catechizing is derived from a word importing the reciprocation of the Voice, after the manner of an Echo. And in this sense it is often to be met with in secular Authors, from whom it was adopted into Religion, and there retains the same

notion.

notion and Office. For by Catechizing, the Church hath alwayes taught the Fundaments and chief Principles of Religion *vivâ voce*. And those that were thus taught, the Greek Writers usually call *Catechumens*, and the Latine *Hearers*; which might as well respect the manner of their Instruction, as their fellowship and Communion with the Church: in which they went no further than to be admitted to hear the Principles of *Christian Faith* made plain unto them. And to Catechizing, thus understood, there will be no inconvenience to affirm that St. *Paul* alluded, *Rom.* 10. 17. the Ear being as properly the door of Religion, as of any other Science. That Catechizing was a way of Instruction, not to be restrain'd to those Catechumens so frequently

quently mentioned in Church-Hiſtory, and the Ancient Canons; but that all Believers did therein Communicate, will be made good in another place of this Diſcourſe.

But if it be doubted whether this be the native meaning of Catechizing, it then follows that we have recourſe unto the occaſion whence it aroſe. For if words are notes of that which the Speaker conceiveth, and conceptions are *Signes* repreſenting that which is ſpoken of; it is neceſſary that he who would rightly underſtand words, ſhould have recourſe unto the things whence they come. Now the Church (which is Gods School) hath ever uſed Catechizing as a term of Art, and we are therefore to underſtand it with reſtraint to ſuch matters as the Church is accuſtomed

customed thereby to instruct. Following herein the Rule of *Thomas*, that in words we must not so much respect their Original, exact, and precise signification and derivation, as whereunto by use of speech they are applyed. 2. 2. q. 92. *Art.* 1. Now seeing that the Church, which is Gods School, hath still by Catechizing taught the first notices of Religion, we may safely cloath it with this definition: *Catechism is a short and easie Instruction, which explains the mysteries of Faith, and the whole Body of Christian Doctrine, in such a manner as may be plainly understood by the lowest Capacities.* And if there be any thing cloudy in this definition, it will receive sufficient light from what is spoken of in the following Chapter.

CHAP.

Chap. II.

The Age of Catechism. The Institution of Adams *and* Abrahams *Family. The Schools of the Prophets. The continual use of Catechizing among the Jews, particularly after the Erection of Synagogues. Their benefit thereby.*

HAving found that Catechism is but Greek for a peculiar manner of Instruction, and that since it was received into the Church, doth signifie a brief and plain Institution of the first and chief grounds of Religion; we may by the Laws of concluding infer,

infer, that Catechizing is as ancient as the principles which are thereby instructed; and these are as old as the first man. For Religion began, when God was *Adams* Catechist, and gave and instructed him in that Law, in whose observation consisted the main Articles of his continuing in a state of excellent Felicity. In which if he had tarried till he had had an off-spring grown up to a Capacity of Religious Education, he would, no doubt, have taught them to observe that Law, which his Maker for that end had assigned him. For we need not be scrupulous to suppose that *Adam* would have been as careful of his Childrens instuction before the fall, as he was after it. Some traces of whose care are to be perceived in his Sons deportment, when they brought their

their Offerings to Gods Altar as Teſtimonies of Gratitude and Devotion: which could not be the effect of meer Natural Inſtinct, but of *Adams* pious diligence to bring them up religiouſly. And though meer Natural Reaſon may Teach man a Belief and worſhip of God, yet to do it with the circumſtances of the two firſt Brethren, exceeds its power.

The underſtanding and practice of the *Primordial Law* of not Eating the forbidden Fruit, would have been ſufficient for *Adam* and all his poſterity: As having in its womb (to uſe *Tertullian*) all thoſe moral precepts which were afterwards delivered by *Moſes*, *Exod.* 20. and by our great Law-giver reduced to two heads: Love to God; Love to our Neighbour, St. *Mark* 12. 30, 31.

31. For if they had observed the first, they would not have broken Gods Commandment; and if they had done the like to the Second, they would not by yielding to the perswasion of the Serpent, have destroyed themselves: but by love to both, have fulfilled the whole Law. As *Tertullian* argues *adverſ. Judæos*, *Cap.* 2. That it was needful for *Adams first Issue* to be instructed in this *Primordial Law*, wherein the whole Morality consisted, none I think will gainsay: That *Adam* (for there was none else to do it) did therein instruct them, we may conclude, not only from the necessity of the thing, which so wise a man as the first could not but perceive; but also from *Adams* justice, to make some amends to his Children in their *Education*, for what he had damaged

ged them by his own *disobedience*. And if the manner of the Instruction be demanded, I shall content my self with the opinion of that *Rabbin*, who ventured (discoursing him upon this Subject) to derive their [*Lekack*] or present Catechism from *Adam*, whom they rationally imagine to have taught his Sons a short and plain Description of the necessary Principles of Holiness and Honesty: which are the *Sum* of all Catechism.

But that which yet affords us a more evident attestation of Catechizing, or delivering and Instructing the Rudiments of Religion, *vivâ voce*, in the First Ages of the world, is the unquestionable Tradition of those Precepts which pass under the name of *Noah*: Into which if we look attentively, they will easily be dis-

discerned to have been the Universal Catechism of all Mankind, and to contain a compleat Scheme of Duties towards God and the Neighbour.

Now among these Precepts, some were greater and more famous, others of an Inferiour and Obscurer rank. Those of the former condition are here spoken of, and usually set down after this manner.

1. Against strange Worship, or Idolatry.
2. Against Blasphemy, or the Cursing of the most Holy Name.
3. Against Effusion of Blood, or Murder.
4. Against Revealing of Nakedness, or Adultery.
5. Against Theft and Rapine.
6. Concerning civil Justice, and Obedience.

7. A-

7. Againſt Eating the limb of a living Creature.

Whereof the two firſt reſpect our Demeanour toward God; the next four belong to the carriage of one man toward another; and the laſt forbids all outrageous cruelty to other living Creatures.

But how this laſt ſhould be reckon'd in the number of thoſe Precepts of Natural Right, common to the whole Humane Race, is not ſo eaſily to be apprehended; eſpecially when 'tis conſider'd that it was not heard of till after the Flood, when God ſaid unto *Noah* coming out of the Ark, Fleſh with the Life thereof, which is the Blood thereof, ſhall ye not eat, *Gen.*9.4. Where the Eating of fleſh is not ſimply prohibited, but the abſcinding and Eating the limbs of living Creatures.

tures. And a late Author gives an instance hereof in Lambs-Stones.

The Reasons usually render'd of this seventh Precept, are the avoidance first of Cruelty; and next, of Communicating in the Customs of Idolatrous Nations: Which at once protest both against its Age and Morality. And upon this account it is, that learned Persons have excluded it the number of *Natural Precepts*, and set it in *Noah*'s Ritual of Ceremonies. But there is a general agreement among the *Jewish Masters*, that the first six Precepts were given to *Adam* from the very beginning of things, and were the common Law of all Nations under Heaven.

But no such matter can be found concerning the seventh: Which is so totally passed over in silence

silence by *Job:* who yet takes notice of all the rest, and justifies his integrity by their observance. And because this perhaps is not obvious to every Reader, it may be no way impertinent, to note the Texts, where the *Idumæan* makes his profession.

1. Against Idolatry, *Job* 31. 26.
2. Against Blasphemy, *Job* 1. 5.
3. Against Homicide, *Chap.* 31. 29.
4. Against Adultery, *Chap.* 31. 9.
5. Against Theft, *Chap.* 31. 7.
6. Against Injustice, *Chap.* 29. 7. *&c.*

And though these six Precepts, without any remote collection, may be deduced from the above-said

said Texts; yet in his whole *Book*, *Job* has not left the least intimation of the seventh: which could not have escaped the observation of so wise a Prince, if therein a Natural Equity had been concerned. St. *Augustine*, in his Eighteenth Book and fourtyseventh Chapter of the *City of God*, affirms that *Job* was neither Native Israelite, nor a Proselyte adopted by their Law; but born and bred in *Idumæa*: And therefore professed not the *six Precepts* upon the account of a Jewish Tradition, but because they were the common Religion of Mankinde.

Before the Law, saith *Tertullian*, was written in Tables of Stone, there was an unwritten Law, which was given neither in *Horeb*, nor *Sinai*, nor in the *Desert*; but in *Paradise*. And

was

was naturally both known and kept by the Fathers; who from the observing of the equity and justice of this Natural Law, received Titles of Approbation and Honour; as *Noah* was called a *just man*, and *Abraham the friend of God*: Tertul. *c.*2. *adversus Judeos.*

And that this unwritten Law given in Paradise, was the *six Precepts*, we may conclude from what Mr. *Seldon* tells us out of *Moseche ben Maimon*, who (saith he) peremptorily delivers, that the *six Precepts were given to the first man from the very beginning of the world.* And therefore ought rather to bear the name of *Adam* than of *Noah:* for the later can be entitled to them no otherwise, than as in him all mankinde was preserved, as in the former they had been begun.

In

In which sense all Nations and kindreds of men, were called the Sons or Children of *Noah*: Among which there was no exteriour badge of distinction, till God gave *Abraham* the Sacrament of *Circumcision*; which did not lessen or abate the extent and power of the *six Precepts*: for after *Circumcision*, the Jews as well as the rest of men stood obliged to their observance. Nor indeed was it possible to be otherwise, seeing that therein was contained the Universal Religion. And at the coming of *Moses*, these Precepts were so far from being evacuated, that they were confirmed: with the addition of others concerning the Sabbath, the Reverence of Parents, and the very thought of defalking other mens goods. All which make up the *Ten words* or *Decalogue*.

logue. And that was now Engraven in Tables of Stone, which before was only written in Tables of Flesh. But the *six Precepts* were the *Catechism* of the world from *Adam* to *Noah*, who received the *Seventh.* In which condition Religion continued till *Abraham* received the Precept of *Circumcision*, upon which came the great distinction of Nations in respect of Worship. And now the Jews had *eight Precepts* for the Rule of Duties, under which they continued untill the time that God at *Mara* gave them a Statute and an Ordinance; and by spaces filled up their Ritual.

But that which most imports the present Subject, is the manner how the *First six Precepts* were instructed: Which without doubt was *vivâ voce*, or by an Oral Institution: for certainly of

things

things unwritten, there can be no other means to instil and propagate their knowledge: For notwithstanding that these *Precepts* contain'd such an apparent *Equity* and *Right*, as could be by none denyed, who therein had once been duly informed: yet there was a necessity of Competent means to procure this information. For let Characters be never so large, and evident in themselves, yet the fairest Paper cannot exhibit them, till thereon they be duly placed. And if the Soul of man be at first as a *Book* wherein nothing is, and yet every thing may be written; then either *Education* or *Instruction*, *Use* or *Discipline* must of necessity fill up this *blank*. And the *Rasa Tabula* of *mans Soul*, as it is most susceptive, so is it likewise most concerned to be first Engra-

ven with those things which indispensibly respect his Duties toward God and his Neighbour; (the contents of the *six Precepts.*) And that the Soul cannot be otherwise furnished therewith, than by *Oral Institution* or *Catechism*, will be granted by all who would not have this *Table* writ upon just like *those* which *Moses* received in the *Mount.*

But what in this case may seem but darkly probable in the Two *Patriarchs of mankinde*, is conceived to be clear and evident in the *Father of the faithful.* For Authors of no contemptible credit, collect from that Encomium God gave *Abraham* for his foreseen Care to instruct his Children and Household [*to keep the way of the Lord, and to do Justice and Judgement*] *Gen.* 18. 19. that this manner of instruction is there

there spoken of. For albeit that to do Justice and Judgement is a principle naturally Imprinted upon mans Soul, in a Character no Mortal Power can efface; yet it was Morally impossible for *Abrahams* Family to keep the [*way of the Lord:*] That is, to be acquainted with the purport and condition of that Covenant God had made with *Abraham*; where there was no Divine Inspiration, nor any written word, to guide them: unless *Abraham* by a gentle and easie Method, introduced them into the knowledge of what so intimately concerned them. And not to be scrupulous about *words* or *forms* of Speech, it is more than probable, that this Holy Man taught his Family *vivâ voce*, or familiarly by word of mouth; which is the true and Genuine Sense of

that whereof we now ſpeak.

But not to place any ſtrength in this inſtance, nor in what is obſerved to this purpoſe, either in the Inſtitution of *Jehoaſh* by *Jehoiada* the Prieſt; nor what *Solomon* inſinuates concerning himſelf; nor in what the *Rabbins* aſſert of the *many houſes* of *Catechiſm* that were in *Hieruſalem*; nor in what ſome write concerning the *Schools of the Prophets*, how that one part of their employment was to Catechize: not placing, I ſay, any ſtrength in theſe inſtances, which might be urged, as they have been, in favour of the antiquity of *Catechiſm*; I ſhall fix upon that which yields both a more obvious and certain Teſtimony of its Ancientneſs, namely; That the Jews have continually had, and to this day have the practice of *Catechiſm*,

chism, by which they introduce their Youth into the knowledge of God, and the Rites of his worship. 'Tis true, there is some difference in the time when this Institution is begun: For the Ancient Jews began not to Teach their Children the Principles of their Religion, till they were compleat Thirteen years of Age; but the Modern Jews in the Eastern parts especially, begin much more early. And this they do, (as *Aaròn Benetás* a *Sabio* in *Barbary* told me) because of their unsettlement, and for fear a sudden removal should prevent them in this duty.

It is very remarkable, that no foot-steps of Catechizing appears in the service of the Temple; which was indeed so wholly Ceremonious, that it may be doubted whether ought of Moral

Religion (the chief of *Catechiſm*) was therein either thought of, or deſigned. Indeed after the Erection of Synagogues there appear great indications that this way of inſtruction was in no vulgar requeſt: But then in fixing the certain time when theſe Religious edifices were Erected, there is ſmall agreement among the *Learned*. That Synagogues were built before the Jews return from *Babylon*, is very uncertain. But after they were returned, it is plain that their Land was full of theſe Houſes dedicated to Gods publick Service: wherein all parts of Divine Worſhip (except Sacrificing) were celebrated. And they may be ſaid to have had that Relation to the Temple, which Parochial Churches have now to the Cathedral. But not to diſpute about the Antiquity and

and Quality of Jewish Synagogues, that which I would observe therein, as most agreeable to the thing in hand, is, That Catechizing was (at least) a Principal part of that Teaching, which was therein frequented. And to attest this remark, one known passage out of *Epiphanius*, compared with another in *Fl. Josephus*, are all the Authorities that are thought needful to be produced.

Ephiphanius speaking of the Scribes (who were the chief Masters of the Synagogues) saith, that they were Διηγηταὶ τῷ νόμῳ, Reporters of the Law; and that they taught ὡς ἐπιστήμην γραμματικήν, a kinde of *Grammatical* knowledge therein. And *Josephus* writes, that by vertue of this Teaching the Law, the Jews were as ready to Answer any Question

demanded of them concerning it, as to their own Name. And the reason he renders of this readiness, is very observable, as to the present Theme, which is this, *Because learning the Principles of their Religion as soon as ever they were come to knowledge, they kept them firmly imprinted* ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς, *in their Souls or Minds.* And how well the circumstances of this way of instructing the Law, suits with Catechizing in the most obvious Notion, I leave the impartial to judge.

Now that the things thus taught were not barely the meer words of the Law, and their naked Reading (as some have supposed,) may be concluded from the good effect and influence which this instruction had upon the instructed. For we find that it preserved them in the true Worship

Worship of the true God: which was a work too high to be accomplished by such low means as *naming*, *spelling*, *joyning Letters* and *Syllables* together, and such other *Abcedarian* and *Grammatical Niceties*. And that by this instruction the Jews were preserved in the true Worship of the true God, is excellently observed in this particular, namely, That albeit the Hebrew Nation, before their Captivity, had Prophets to instruct them in the true Worship of God, yet they were alwayes falling into Idolatry. But when they were returned out of *Babylon*, though they wanted Prophets, yet they kept close, and faithfully adhered, to the Worship of the true God. (Though it must not be denyed but that many corruptions and heterodox conceits were therein re-

retained.) And the reason that hereof is rendered, is, the instruction used in the Synagogues: Whereby they were so throughly grounded in what they professed, and so firmly and early rooted in the Knowledge and Service of God, that their defection therefrom was even Morally impossible. But when they wanted this plain way of being thus Catechized, they fell into all those evils, which are the undenyable consequences of the want of Catechizing, even *Diversities of Opinions*, *Sects* and *Divisions*.

St. *Paul* Arguing with the *Gnostick*, and concluding him excuseless in what he did, useth this Topick: That he had not onely the Law in readiness to Teach him otherwise, but had already therein been a *Catechumen*: But whether we may hence infer

infer, That the Old Synagogue had a formal *Catechism* like the Modern, I shall not temeariously pronounce. Yet something to this purpose may be collected from those Commentaries which pass under the name of St. *Ambrose*: Where we find the Office of those Doctors mentioned, 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. thus expounded: *Illos dicit Doctores*, &c. He calls those Doctors or Teachers, who in the Church instructed Children in Reading and retaining their *Lessons*, according to the custom of the Synagogue: for their Tradition hath passed unto us. If you ask me what the Lessons were, which the Doctors Taught the Children: I answer, The Principles of Religion. If you demand the manner how they were Taught: I reply, In a manner sutable to their Capacities.

ties. If again you demand, what that manner was: I return, Catechizing, in the native and common acception of the Word. But if Catechizing should be ill looked upon, as being a Tradition derived from the Jews; then the greatest part of Christianity may be had under a jealous aspect upon the same account: for it is most certain, that a large share both of *Christian Rites* and Doctrines were derived from Judaism, which was not to be laid desolate by Christianity, but compleated and reformed. The Primitive Christianity being (according to Mr. *Selden*) the lawful and Prophetick Off-spring of the Old Judaism.

CHAP.

Chap. III.

Catechizing in times of the Apostles. Evidences thereof in St. Pauls *Epistles. The Contents of their* Catechism.

But how dim soever the traces of this kind of instruction be in the *Jewish Dispensation*, yet the Foot-steps thereof are more traceable in the Gospel. Where *Catechism* is not obscurely intimated, if we may rely any thing on the Words and Sentences which therein occur to this purpose.

And in the First place, it cannot be denyed but that in the inspired Epistles we plainly read of two

two sorts of Christians, namely, such as were newly admitted into the Church, compared by St. *Peter* to *New-born Babes*, 1 Pet. 2. 2. and such as had been therein a longer time; called by St. *Paul* the *Perfect*, in respect of their greater Progress in Christian Religion; or the wisdom which descends from above, or which Christ came to Teach and Infuse, St. *Jam.* 3. 17. To the former of these they gave Milk, and instructed them in the easier points of Religion: But strong meat was ordained for the later. Who having been first well Catechized in Christianity, were capable of higher mysteries. And of this we have a clear illustration in the sixth to the *Hebrews*, where we first read of the ὁ τ ἀρχῆς τῦ Χρις λόγος, *The Doctrine, or discourse, of the beginning of Christ:* Or (as

(as we now read it) the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ: That is, a *Catechism* which contained a brief Summary of those Principles which were necessary for every Christian to learn, and to be laid as a Foundation meet for the Superstructure of higher mysteries, and matters of a deeper reach; such as the Priest-hood of *Melchizedeck*, and how he was a type of Christ, *Heb.* 7. And of these later St. *Paul* would not intreat, till he saw the former so faithfully received, believed and practised, as that they might be laid aside for the present.

Now the ἀρχαὶ, or Principles wherein Christians were first instructed, are thus reckon'd by the Apostle: First, Repentance from dead works: Secondly, Faith towards God: Thirdly, the Doctrine of Baptism: Fourthly,

ly, Impoſition of hands, or Confirmation: Fifthly, The Article of the Reſurrection from the dead: And Laſtly, The certainty of *Eternal Judgement*. Theſe were the chief and main points of the Apoſtles *Catechiſm*, the firſt Principles of the Oracles of God, the rudiments of Chriſtian Religion, ſaith our Old Marginal note, or the *Catechiſm* wherein the younger ſort of thoſe times were inſtructed. And theſe Articles now mentioned, or ſome ſuch-like, were (no doubt) that form of Doctrine, that manner of Catechizing which was delivered to the Romans, *Rom.* 6. 17. or as our margin reads out of the Greek, whereunto *ye were delivered or given up*: Where the ordinary phraſe is changed by the Apoſtle. For albeit to ſay, To this form of Doctrine you

you were delivered, is not so agreeable either to *the Latine or English speech*, as, This form of Doctrine which was delivered unto you: Yet the Apostle makes use of the first, to tell us, saith *Cajetan*, That not so much the form of Religion was delivered to men, as that men were delivered to the form of Religion. That so by this means Religion might be known to have Authority and Power over man, and not man over Religion. But not to insist upon this; it need not be doubted that *this form of Doctrine* spoken of by St. *Paul*, was a Summary of Christianity, or the *Catechism* used in those early and best times of Christianity, which contained the first Principles of the Oracles of God. By which some understand the Creed, as *Cyril* of *Hierusalem*

rusalem in his *Catech.* 4. styled by him the *milkey Introduction*, in allusion to St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 2. *Heb.* 5. 12. Others, of the Creed and Lords Prayer, as *Bede*: Others, the Creed and Decalogue, as *Aquinas*: Others, all those Elements which the *Catechumens* learned, and professed at *Baptism*; whereof the Creed was the Principal. Which with the Lords Prayer the Clergy was enjoyned to Teach the people, *Concil. Mogunt. Cap.* 45. And it was a *general command* of the Church, that those who were to be Baptized, should have a certain time allotted for the learning and rehearsing of the Creed. Which the Estern Christians alwayes repeated with a clear Voice, when they came to the Holy Communion of Christs Body and Blood: As appears in the Twenty second Ca-

Canon of the *Council* of *Toledo*. But if this seem to restrain Catechizing only to such *Catechumens* as in the History and Canons of the Church are frequently mentioned; and that this kinde of instruction was not used toward those whom by Baptism the Church had already received into her Communion: It then follows, that we show how *Catechism* was a plain Institution wherein all believers did Communicate. And in the first place it is manifest out of *Oecumenius* (expounding the στοιχεῖα ἀρχῆς λογίων Θεοῦ) That there were some points of Christian Religion wherein the Novices were Catechized before Baptism, and some after. Those in which they were Catechized before Baptism, were, *The necessity of Repentance: to renounce the Devil and all his works: To be-*

believe in God, &c. And those points which they learned after Baptism, were the *Mysteries* of our *Saviours passion* and *Priesthood*, his taking *our sins on himself*, and working our Salvation; the *Mysteries of our Resurrection, of the last Judgement, and everlasting reward, or life.* And the *Catechism* of these was common to all believers, because necessary.

Secondly, That Catechizing belong'd to all within the Church, and was not confined only to the Novices in Religion, and Candidates of Christianity, we may confidently infer from the express words of St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 6.6. where he divides the whole Church, to which that *Letter* was directed, into *Catechist and Catechized.* Where by the later cannot be meant only those who were

were not yet admitted to Holy Baptism, Styled by the Church-Canons *Catechumens*: For then we must conclude that the *Catechumen* and believer were all one: contrary to *Tertullian de Pœnit. Cap. 6. de Coronâ Milit. Cap.* 2. and all the Fathers: And that there was a Christian Church in *Galatia* consisting of *Catechumens*, or unbaptized persons, *i. e.* a Church of Christians without Christians. Which absurd inconveniences cannot be evaded, unless by those Catechized spoken of by the Apostle, we understand such as had received Baptism already, and were still to be instructed in that Religion whereinto by that Divine rite they had been admitted. So that in St. *Pauls* time Catechizing in its native acception was continued even to those who had attained

rained already to so much knowledge in the Principles of Christianity, as render'd them, in the Language of the Ancients, *Competentes*, or persons fit for Baptism, and to be admitted to the higher Mysteries of Religion. The same Apostle told the *Corinthians*, that *he had fed them with Milk*, that is, by the consent of all, with *Catechetical Doctrines*. And there is no doubt that those Texts in *Heb.* 5. 12. *Heb.* 6. 1. are pregnant intimations of this truth. The like may by affirmed of what St. *Luke* has recorded concerning the Introduction of the *Eloquent Apollos*, and his *most Excellent Theophilus*, into the knowledge of Christ. And what has been said, affords sufficient ground of asserting *Catechism* to have been in use with

Act. 18. 25

S. *Luke* 1. 4.

with the Apostles, and that it descended from the *Synagogue*. How it was the practise also of the Primitive Church, is the subject of the ensuing Chapter.

Chap. IV.

The Apostles Catechists in several Provinces. The Declension and Restauration of Catechizing. Catechists Styled Exorcists, &c.

But if we imagine that the marks of Catechizing are less apparent in the New Testament, yet if we look into *Ecclesiastical* History, we shall there find that the Apostles had their several Provinces wherein they

were Catechists. And that by means of constant Catechizing, many Kingdoms within Forty years after *the Passion* received an alteration in their Pagan Ceremonies. Although it must be confessed that it was not long till the Malice and Envy of the Devil and man brought a decay in this most useful Institution. For in the second Age, we read that Catechizing was so far declined, that *Origen* (living in the Two hundred and thirtieth of Christ) was honoured with the Title of its Restorer. But where this Restauration of Catechizing by *Origen* was affected, is not so evident. There is a great probability that *Judea* was the Scene of so good an Action. For we read that he was very kindly received there, after he fled out of *Alexandria*, upon his falling into disgrace

grace with the Christians of that Country, because in the time of *Decius* he had offer'd Incense to an *Idol*, to save his body (of which his care was not alwayes justifiable) from being defiled by a filthy *Ethiopian*.

In *Alexandria*, *Origen* could not be said to restore Catechizing, for it is expressly affirmed that there he succeeded in *Cathedrâ Catechetica*, his Master *Clemens*, as *Clemens* had done his Master *Pantenus* in the same chair. And of these two later we are told, that they made it their employment to Teach the grounds of Religion, not by Sermons or Homilies, but by *Catechism*, in such Schools and Colledges as in great likelihood they themselves had founded for that purpose.

So that we see how in *Alexandria* (and we may hope that the

like was in other parts) there was a succession of *Catechists*; who were also called *Exorcists*, not only because (as *Isidore* explains the word) by Prayer in the Name of Jesus they cast *unclean Spirits* out of those who were possessed: Nor meerly in regard of Exorcising the Pagan *Catechumens*, when they came to be Baptized (as is to be seen at large in *Burchardus Unormatensis*) but because that by their diligent Catechizing the Principles of Christianity, they pulled down Idolatry, and thereby cast Satan out of his Kingdom, and dispossessed him of that Tenor which by Idol-worship he had so long usurped. And the first part of the Vow of Baptism, binds the Baptized to renounce Idolatry under the name of Devil. That Exorcising was an Office of good repute

repute in the Ancient Church, and not to be invaded by the *Laity*, is clear out of *Tertullian*, who in his Book *adverſ. Hæret. Cap.* 41. tells, how the very Heretical Women were become ſo ſhameleſs and malepart, that they durſt Teach, *Diſpute*, Exorciſe, and even Baptize.

Mr. *Calvin* makes it a probable conjecture, that the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* was not Penn'd till ſome time after the Goſpel was, and the Church had erected a form of Government, and had Conſtituted among other things, an order of Inſtruction, or *Catechiſm*, in which both the adult converts, and Children of believers were to be Taught: And he further adds, that thoſe Principles mentioned *Heb. 6.* had reſpect unto the uſual and eſtabliſhed form of *Catechiſm*. Now if this con-

jecture be argumentative and referred to its proper place, there will need no more to prove Catechizing to be of Apostolical Institution and Practice.

CHAP. V.

The Antiquity of Catechism probable upon the account of its convenience. In respect of the Object; Method of Instruction.

BUt suppose that all which has hitherto been observed be not evident, nay, that nothing of this way of Teaching was ever in use with the Primitive Instructors of Christianity, which would be a very uncouth supposal; yet this doth only conclude

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against the Age, but not the convenience of *Catechism*. It no way proves that such a way of instruction had not been highly rational to Introduce ignorant Infidels into the knowledge of the true Faith. For all those who by ordinary means were to be converted to Christian Religion, were no less ignorant of its principles, than those Infants who are Born within the Church; and therefore to be Catechized therein, was as proper and requisite for them, as for these: For the ignorance of the one, as well as of the other, was to be removed by such means as all discreet *Teachers* have thought suitable to that end.

Now it is obvious to every capacity, that no mans ignorance can be removed by *Rhetoricating Haraugues*, *Pompous Discourses*,

ſes, profound Reſerches, &c. But by humble and plain Leſſons: Eaſie and obvious rules: And ſuch *A. b. c.* Rudiments, as fall under the comprehenſion of the rude and unlearned; and which are proper to prepare them for higher Leſſons. In brief, though the things which are taught be in themſelves ſublime and difficult, yet the manner of Teaching them muſt be humble and eaſie. And this way of inſtruction was (no doubt) purſued by the Primitive Doctors, who did not only prepare by Catechizing the ruder infidel to receive Baptiſm, but did alſo by the ſame courſe build up and educate thoſe into a more perfect knowledge of Chriſtianity, whom they had already Baptized. And therefore κατηχεῖν and οἰκοδομεῖν, to Catechize and edifie, are with Gram-

Grammarians terms expressive of each other.

And this makes Catechizing highly convenient in respect of the true Method of learning: For therein is observed the natural path of instruction, which ever begins with short and obvious notions, to the end the learner may not be discouraged with a difficult and perplexed entrance. For if the minds of Novices, or young Disciples, should be loaden and puzled with multitude and variety, or with obscureness and prolixity of Rules, they would be in danger to reject the whole Institution, for the irksome painfulness of its first grounds. And albeit that all beginnings are attended with hardships: Yet they ought in all reason to be reduced to as great an easiness as their Nature will afford;

ford; to the end that they may not dishearten the Undertaker. This we see is the course of all Arts and Sciences, both liberal and mechanick, which have their Introductive and Initiatorie Systems, containing such easie Elements as being first known, fit the *learner* for deeper documents. And these lower Rudiments hold some resemblance with that lesser size of Vertues, which some *Platonists* call Purgative, because they are first taken into the Soul to clense and prepare her for the reception of *Greater*. And in Religion it is as requisite as in humane Arts, that the first Lessons be framed according to the weak and tender Capacities of youngest *Beginners*.

Now as there is small probability that in Writing he should ever be able to give the true proportion

tion of words, who never learned the first *draught* of *Letters*: So there is no great assurance, that any one should make any solid and firm Progress in the Mysteries of Christianity, who was never acquainted with the Principles thereof: or, That those should be able to give any good account of the hope that is in them, who never learned the Articles of *Faith*, on which their hope is founded.

And this is a Clue that leads us to the right way of grounding Religion: for by what is said, it is easie to perceive, that solid Catechizing is to the orderly structure of *Spiritual knowledge*, what a sure Foundation is to any material Fabrick. And therefore he that would edifie himself, or others, in Christianity, without this groundwork, builds but

a Visionary Church, or a house upon the sand. As hath been sadly visible in those persons who being not founded upon this Rock, have been quickly shaken and blown down with every Wind of *Corrupt Doctrine*, vented by men crafty to contrive deceit. It being impossible that those should be stedfast in such Principles of Religion, wherein they were never rightly and duly instructed.

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CHAP.

Chap. VI.

Catechism *necessary in respect of the increase and advancement of Spiritual knowledge: To have a distinct understanding of things necessary to Salvation*, &c.

And not only the sure grounding, but also the regular and solid advance and increase in the knowledge of *things Divine*, makes Catechizing a necessary Introductive. For unless by this means we be firmly principled in Christianity, our knowledge therein will be both small and unstable; and as a pernicious consequent thereof, we shall become

come trifling and affected in that little we know. For it fares in Divinity as Philosophy, wherein a little Smattering knowledge makes men vain and assuming, whom a deeper insight therein would render composed and setled. And this has been, and is still, miserably apparent in the Ancient and Modern Sactaries, whom a meer conceit of knowledge hath tempted to assume and usurp the place and function of Teachers, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm, 1 *Tim.* 1.7. And indeed their ignorance is the Mother of such assuming knowledge, as is seen in our great pretenders to *Spiritual science*, who but too exactly prove themselves descended of those Old *Gnosticks*, who were so pestilential to the Primitive Church; being notoriously addicted

dicted to Blaſpheme, rail at, and ſpeak evil of the things they know not; and in a peculiar manner are gifted with Maliciouſneſs, Avarice, Schiſmaticalneſs, Rebellion, and Contumacy: According to their deſcription in St. *Jude* 10, 11, 12, &c. And the want of having been duly acquainted with the true grounds of Religion, is one main reaſon why they are in that *Divine ſcience* ſuch Smatteres and half-witted; whereof there is ſmall hopes ever to have them cured, but by a full Inſtitution in thoſe Elements which are undenyably requiſite to ſound knowledge.

But Catechizing is not only neceſſary upon the account of a regular entrance and encreaſe of knowledge in Religion, but alſo to give us a clear intuition of thoſe particular truths whereof

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we cannot be ignorant, but with the peril of our eternal Happineſs. For notwithſtanding that all things neceſſary to Salvation are clear and plain in Scripture, yet the Scripture it ſelf is ſo ſpacious a field, that even a wary Travailer may therein looſe himſelf. And beſides this, the things neceſſary to be known by us in order to our future welfare, are in *Sacred Writ* ſo often mingled with things that are otherwiſe, that it exceeds the generality of Capacities to find them out, and rightly to ſever. Thoſe that are idle (as the moſt are in this ſtudy) will not take pains; and thoſe that are ignorant have not the ability, to diſtinguiſh, collect, aud reduce ſuch *neceſſary points* to their reſpective Chapters. And yet till ſuch points be plainly digeſted into *ſeveral Heads*, many,

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at leaſt the illiterate multitude, will unavoidably want a competent knowledge of what is neceſſary both to their Temporal and Immortal happineſs. Now that the gathering of theſe neceſſary Truths into *Sums* and *Models*, is the proper work of *Catechiſm*, is viſible in all thoſe *Syſtemes* which have ever born that Name. And of this truth, our own *Church-Catechiſm* yields a ſufficient Teſtimony: In which all things that concern *Faith*, *Practice*, *Prayer*, and *Doctrine*; are collected into ſuch ſhort and plain *Sums*, that the weakneſs of no mans Wit can either hinder altogether the knowledge, or excuſe the utter ignorance of things neceſſary to Salvation. For whoſoever with a mind free from prejudice, ſhall impartially peruſe the *Church-Catechiſm*, he there-

therein may observe all saving Truths reduced to such short, but full Heads, that the weak are not left to the hazardous, nor the slothful to the laborious reserch thereof in Holy Scriptures.

Chap. VII.

Catechizing the most suitable means to heal the distempers of this Church. Several Propositions to be supposed. A short digression concerning our Disorders.

But we will yet suppose that all which hitherto has been delivered, ought to receive no better estimation than meer ordinary Discourse; and that we are to proceed upon a new ground, and examine the necessity of Catechizing in respect of the present temper and disposition, or indeed rather distempers and disorders of this Church and

and People. And in order unto this, it will not be altogether impertinent and uſeleſs, a little to conſider what our preſent diſorders are.

And in the Firſt place, we cannot but obſerve, that our declenſion both from the Deſigne and Rule of the Goſpel, is not conſpicuous only in thoſe grand Debauchees, who grow weary of the Name of Chriſt, or profeſs it only to diſgrace it: But alſo in thoſe who ſeem ſtrict and ſevere in performing all the formal and exteriour part of Diſcipleſhip. Even thoſe I mean, who are zealous hearers of Chriſts Word, and conſtant Communicants at his Table, not profeſſing Devotion to any other. For even theſe are content (as occaſion ſerves) to abandon that Purity, Continence, Meekneſs, Humility, Candor,

Candor, Mercifulness, and other instances of a sweet nature, so vehemently urged by our Divine Lawgiver, and which are the genuine result of true Christian Principles, for that one *Law* of Sordid Interest, brutal Passion, and Churlish self-preservation. Although they cannot but acknowledge, that all these are totally opposite to the true Spirit of *Christianity*. And besides professed Polititians, there are others who seem to look upon Religion as a meer Engine of *State*, and a thing that is as Tractable for Battery as Defence. And who, notwithstanding their contrary pretences, live as if they regarded not what Christ chiefly aimed at by his Incarnation, Death and Resurrection. And how that he gave himself for us (both in his Birth and Death) to redeem us from

from all iniquity, and to purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. And that he rose from the dead to bless us, in turning every one of us from our iniquities. And that the main designe of our inspired Christianity, is the entire reformation of our lives, and to make us as good as our profession.

But besides this sort of Nominal Christians, there is another, which are so far transported with the opinion of that Union which they fancy already to enjoy with Christ, that they dream to be in present possession of that Vision which is peculiar to the future State. And they are so dazel'd with the supposititious glory of their Spiritual perfection, that they contemn the means ordained to make them truely perfect, because they fancy they have arrived at it already. And

And with these may be joyned all such who are so closely addicted to their own opinions, that they think it a matter of Conscience, Piety and Religion to oppose and condemn whosoever are not of their mind and perswasion. Since whose rise we have been under a sensible decay of Charity, and (as a natural consequent thereof) an increase of wickedness.

But if these ingross not all the occasions of our Disorders, there is another sort of people who will fill up their measure: Those I mean, who pervert the plainest Scriptures to such a meaning, as doth best help to carry on their designs: And what is yet worse, who make it matter of conscience to assert that sense of the Text which they have perversely mistaken. And this deifying our own

own Interpretations; and tyrannically enforcing them upon others: This restraining of the Word of God from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty wherein Christ and his Apostles left them, is, and hath been the only Fountain of all the Schisms of the Church, and that which makes them immortal: The common incendiaries of Christendom, and that which tears into pieces, not the Coat, but the Bowels and Members of Christ: *Ridente Turcâ, nec dolente Judæo.* Take away these walls of separation, and all will quickly be one. Take away the damning of men for not subscribing to the words of men, as the Words of God; require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man *Master* but him

him only. Let those leave claiming *Infallibility*, who have no Title to it; and let them that in their *words* disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their *Actions*. In a word, take away tyranny in Opinions, by which the Devil withstands the power of *Truth*, and restore Christians to their just and full liberty of captivating their understandings to Scripture only, and as Rivers, whose passage is not interrupted, run all to the Ocean; so it may well be hoped by Gods blessing, that *Universal liberty* thus moderated, may quickly reduce us to Truth and Unity. These thoughts of peace may come from the God of peace, to whose blessing I recommend them. And that this may not be looked upon for some singularity in my own perswasion, I have transcribed the words

out of Mr. *Chillingworth*, and he out of another, and encloſed them in a Parentheſis.

But taking no delight to travail further in ſearch of thoſe diſtempers which I am unable to remedy; The only comfort is, that they cannot be looked upon as the iſſues of our Religion, nor any way be charg'd upon the Principles we profeſs. And therefore we muſt ſeek elſewhere to lay the imputation: and I ſhall go no further than to what I mentioned in the Introduction, even, the Omiſſion, or luke-warm uſe of Catechizing.

And here in the Firſt place, it cannot be denyed, how that the generality of the people of this Kingdom, have for many years (at leaſt during the time of our Inteſtine Wars) either been deſtitute of all Catechizing, or have

have been Catechized only in such Principles, as were good for nothing but to establish the Elder in a Cursed Schism and Rebellion, and to infect the Younger with the same Contagion. The said effects whereof are still visible in the unpeaceable Tenets of some, and in the want of a due understanding of Religion in most. In respect of which, we have need to be taught again, which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God; being become such as have need of Milk, and not of strong Meat. The greatest part of the common people, being so far unable to reap any benefit from the handling of abstruser Mysteries in eloquent and elaborate discourses, (which is so studiously pursued by our *Junior* and *Florid Theologues*) that they want in-

ſtruction in the plaineſt parts of *Catechiſtical* Doctrines. For notwithſtanding that we boaſt much of our knowledge of Chriſt, and that our Proficiency is ſo great in Religion, that we conceive our ſelves wiſer than our Teachers; yet if the Tree may be judged by its fruits, we ſhall be found ſhamefully ignorant of what we aſſume to know, & to have little of that wiſdom which deſcends from above, wch Chriſt came to Teach & Infuſe, & which is Pure, Peaceable, Gentle, eaſie to be entreated, merciful, without Hypocriſie & Wavering.

In the Second place, we cannot but with deep reſentments obſerve, that ſince the time God turned again our Captivity, and reſtored this Church to the free uſe of his Ordinances, Catechizing has met but with cold entertainment, even from thoſe by whom

whom it ought to have been most lovingly caressed. For in most places it has been looked upon rather as a Foreigner, than a Native of the Church; and as fruits of their mouth, never in season but for a few days in *Lent*. And even then too, the *Church-Catechism* is generally taught, without any such explanation as is needful, in respect of those slender Capacities to whose instruction it is chiefly devoted.

And if, in the Third place, we consider who those are which on the one hand hinder the progress and settlement of Unity, Peace, and concord in this Church, by an undutiful froward resisting of *her Laws*: Or, who they are that on the other hand Apostatize and utterly forsake her Communion; it will be found upon due examination, that we have laid

the ground of the disobedience of the one, and of the defection of the other, in a want of a timely and diligent Catechizing

And as for the First sort, namely, the disobedient and refractary (who are now known by the very candid name of *Dissenters*) they cannot pretend to a more plausible excuse of their undutifulness, than that they were never duly Catechized to the contrary. For granting them to be persons not totally forsaken of all ingenuity and right reason, we cannot imagine that they should so foully violate their bounden Duties both to *God* and *Man*, had they ever been fully taught, or did clearly retain any thing but an imperfect and prejudicate knowledge of *those Duties*, as they are plainly set down in the *Church-Catechism*. And

And as for the Later sort, to wit, those who have Apostatized and faln from ours to the Roman perswasion, they have been so far from having their first tinctures and foundation in Religion according to our publick *Catechism*, that they might say thereof as those in *Acts* 19. 2. did of the Holy Ghost. But we must limit this observation chiefly to those who had the unhappiness to be born in this Church when she was under the Cross, and wore the marks of her great Master. And as for those who had been instructed in our *Church-Catechism*, yet before they left us, they had so far unlearnt it, as that they retain'd of that System of our Religion, such loose, rambling and incoherent notions, as if it were wholly enthusiastick, or had been compiled by persons

deeply *Hypochondriacal.* And for closure of this Paragraph, I shall only adde, That none could ever be met with, who for ends truly Spiritual and Religious, did ever abandon this for the *Roman Church*, who had been throughly grounded in her *Catechism.*

And there will want no reasons to support this Assertion, if it be duly considered, how the very frame and contexture of the *Catechism* doth obviate and oppose all the main errors of Popery, as they relate either to Faith, or Practice; to Prayer, or Doctrine.

And First, he that has been duly Catechized in the Apostles Creed, will not only be armed against a spurious explication of the Old Articles of our Faith, but also against a needless addi-

tion.

tion of New ones. For he will find, that the first *twelve* contain such a perfect Summary of all saving Truths simply necessary to be believed, that those Articles added thereunto by the Council of *Trent*, ought to be rejected upon the account of being *Superfluous*. And at the same time he will find ground enough to explode that *Implicite Faith*, so much relyed upon in the *Romish Church*, who considers the necessity of a personal belief, as it is clearly required in the first word of the Creed, which in Latine gives name to the whole.

And in the next place, as to those errors of Popery that concern our Practice, they will be certainly discovered and refuted by a right understanding of the *Decalogue*, which by all is grant-

ed to be a clear and perſpicuous rule of what we are to do both toward God and our Neighbour.

And a man that is well grounded in the Doctrine of the firſt Commandment, knows, that he muſt reſerve all Divine Honour, truſt, devotion to God alone, and that he may beſtow no part thereof upon the Creature. And therefore cannot but avoid and abhor thoſe *Romiſh* Doctors that would make him a Client to the Saints, and a conſtant Votary to the B. Virgin and his Guardian Spirit. He that is well grounded in the Doctrine of the ſecond Commandment, will never be induced to believe, that the Image is to adored with the ſame worſhip that is due to what is worſhipped: He will be wary of admitting any bodily repreſenta-

ſentations of the Holy Trinity: And look jealouſly upon all the Doctrine of Image-worſhip, which he ſees to be vindicated with a few remote and ſuſpicious diſtinctions, deviſed by the Fathers of that Doctrine, on purpoſe to maintain its Credit. He that is throughly inſtructed in the Doctrine of the third Commandment, and hath thence been taught to tremble at, and reverence the Holy Name of the Almighty, will never be induced to believe, that frequent curſing and ſwearing, if cuſtomary, is venial, or a ſin which is pardonable in its own nature, and for which the favour of God cannot be forfeited: That equivocating in Oaths is lawful: That our moſt Solemn Oaths may be diſpenſed with: That the dreadful Name of God may be uſed in the unwar-

warrantable exorcization of the Creatures: That understanding and devotion are not necessarily required to our invocations upon God. He that has been throughly informed of the minde of its eternal Authour in the fourth Commandment, will never give up himself to a Religion that prefers a mans day before Gods, or a Saints day before the Lords: Which would alter the institution of God himself, as was designed by Pope *Silvester*, who decreed that Thursday should be kept for the Lords day. He that hath well learned the fifth Commandment, must do great violence to his understanding, before he can chuse to be of a Religion that loves to drink the blood of Princes: That absolves Subjects from their Allegiance to their lawful Soveraigne:

veraigne: That gives power to a Vicar to depose Princes at pleasure: That arms Subjects with power to murther their King. The like may be said of all the Precepts of the Royal Law of God, which is the most perfect rule of our obedience, and which we are Taught to violate, so soon as we have given up our selves to Popery, and to the service of the *Roman Moloch*. And though these are Mysteries which the *Romish Seducers* carefully conceal, and sometime zealously inveigh against, while they are compassing *easie Proselytes*, with whom they deal in the most specious pretences; yet they have no sooner deluded them to give up their Names to Popery, and thereupon to shake hands with all liberty of judging for themselves, than by degrees they let them

them know what is to be done. And if they ſtartle at doing what is commanded them, this is preſently cenſured for a relique of their *Old Hereſie*, and that there was ſomething wanting in their converſion, which cannot be ſupplyed, but by acting throughly all the moſt horrible injunctions of their New Faith.

And by the ſame means of being well Catechized in the Lords Prayer, a man will be able to apprehend and reject the many errors Popery would impoſe upon him in that high concern. For thereby he will clearly perceive that Prayer ought to be made to God only, and that none can ſhare with him in that, or any other part of Divine and Religious worſhip. And that for this reaſon he ought not to embrace a Religion which enjoyns him

him to pray unto Saints and Angels, and that too not only to have them intercede to God for him, but also to help him in his necessities, and to deliver him both in Bodily and Ghostly dangers. And that this may not be thought the fault of Rosaries, Hours, and Books of private Devotions (for which the Church of *Rome* is accountable, as having confirmed them by her Authority) it is also the Tenor of her *publick Service*: as is plainly to be seen in the Collects, Hymns, and Litanies of that Breviary which was restored by the Council of *Trent*, and authorized by several Popes, and which is at this day in uncontroulable use through all the Papal Dominions.

And we might also observe the like concerning the Doctrine of the

the Sacraments, in which whosoever is once fully instructed according to the *Catechism* of this Church, will quickly discern the abuses thereinto introduced by Popery. To mention no more than what belongs to the Author of a Sacrament; which our *Catechism* asserts, and which is an undenyable Truth, to be only Christ. And therefore all those things are to be excluded the number of Sacraments, that are not of his immediate and clear appointment. And that *Orders*, *Penance*, *Confirmation*, *Marriage*, *Extream Unction* (all Romish Sacraments) are not of Christs Institution, is easily discernable to men but slenderly versed in the Holy Bible: And therefore not to be received for the Sacraments of Christ, but inventions of those, who Teach for Doctrines the

the commandments of men. Now by these imperfect intimations we may safely infer, That those who have had their Foundation in Religion surely laid according to the publickly allowed *Catechism* of this Church, must have other ends to serve than those of Religion, and drive other projects then Gods honour, and their own Salvation, who forsake her Communion for that of *Rome*.

But to return: What ever hath unhappily contributed to our Revolting to the one hand or the other from the established Religion of this Church, there is none that will deny but that the lack of a plain and solid Catechizing has had therein a very large share. And therefore we may conclude, That the careful practice of that, will be a chief means,

means to restore Union and Peace, the Omission whereof hath occasioned the contrary: And indeed, Catechizing seems the the only proper way not only to strengthen those that do stand, but to raise up those that are faln; if we consider how ineffectual all other ways have proved, which have been managed to this end. Which now come to be surveyed.

CHAP.

Chap. VIII.

The Methods used for our reclaiming, surveyed; proving ineffectual, &c.

And here we need not be told, how Indulgence and Clemency, Acts of Amnesty and Grace, have been so far unable so much as to work us up to a *good humour*, that like fresh pastures to unruly beasts, they have only served to strengthen us for a sturdier resistance. Nor need we be told of making converts with the *Churches patrimony:* for though by this means some may be invited to bear the Ark of God, yet they do it but like the *Philistins* kine, who were still lowing after the calves they had left

left behind them. It needs not be demonstrated that our frowardness and opiniastrè are not to be cured by such Methods: But that which I would chiefly take notice of, is, that *Disputation* and *Preaching*, which out of an agreeableness that they are generally thought to bear to our distempers, and the powerfulness of their management, have obtained a *Name* to be the only proper remedies. But the continuance of the malady, is a convincing argument that these are not so proper for this purpose, as is so generally supposed. And give me leave to speak of these two freely; and first of Disputation, which is a meer empyrick prescription in order to heal our present distempers. For though Disputation, as it is managed by the Pen, may have got a great Vogue

Vogue in the World, yet we can never hope that our *Dissenting Judgements* should hereby be reconciled, if with due seriousness we consider, First, the manner of their conduct: Secondly, the matter to be disputed: Thirdly, the persons thereby to be wrought upon.

And First, if the conduct of Disputes fall under a calm, unprejudiced and reflexive review, (as they appear in Print) the Pen-men thereof seem to have intended rather the Defamation, than Conviction of each other; and to have been of an opinion that men were to be refuted, as *Mercury* of old was worshipt, by throwing Dirt and Stones in their Face. But we have been Taught by miserable experience that the lashing of a *Few*, hath been subservient to no better end

end than to exasperate the *whole party:* And that our keenest arguments, if we may judge by the Event, have only served to alarm the adversary into a better provision for future resistance, and to strengthen their Opinion in that part wherein the *Attaque* had discovered it to be the weakest. But grant (as indeed we must) that the Dissenters (to whom this Paragraph chiefly relates) are not able to stand in Argument before their opponents; yet we must also grant, that there is a want of *Decorum* in the Victors carriage, while his Argument loseth its efficacie, through the looseness, luxury, or rigour of its expression. For it is too apparent to conceal, that there are so many unmanly reflexions in most of our late Controversies, that discreet & sober persons loath the reading of

of those Pages where they occur. Which gives occasion for doubting that such arguings so managed, proceed not from that *Spirit of meekness wherewith the overtaken Brother should be restored*; nor were designed to procure Unity and Concord among us, seeing that so little of that *Charity* can therein be discerned, which is the bond of Peace, and sure groundwork of all true Reconcilement. And if the conduct of our *Debates* were throughly considered, we might find this Church complaining like the Eagle in the Greek Epilogue, which seeing her Breast wounded with a Feather'd Dart, cryed out with Tears, Alas! my own kinde hath destroyed me. But to proceed.

It cannot be doubted, but that some opinions sooner dye by being contemn'd, than taken notice of.

of. And I am perſwaded, that this *National Church* is now troubled with many Opinions which long ere this would have found their own Graves, if they had not been kept alive with oppoſition. In ſo much that it may be ſaid of this particular Church, what was of the Catholick, That if ſhe had ſtopt and damn'd up the Originals and Springs of Controverſies, rather than determining for one part, to give them as it were a Pipe and Conduit to convey them to Poſterity, ſhe had not ſuffer'd that inundation of Opinions with which at this day ſhe is over-run. A policy ſtill in practice in the Popiſh Countries, where thoſe *Books* of controverſies are ſcarce to be met with, wherein their Religion is maintained againſt Reformed Churches.

ches. By which means they live free from those Dissentions wherewith their Neighbours are afflicted, to their scandal and ruine. And I hope we may safely imitate their *wisdom*, whose *errors* we abhor.

But if Controversies were as necessary, as by some they are pretended to be, yet their conduct ought so far to be reformed, as that at least there be a cessation from hostile expressions, which have hitherto been of no better use than to exasperate men into a petulant and peevish vindication of that *name* under which they conceived themselves to be reviled. Next, that the Disputers would not vent and foam out their personal piques and animosities under the pretence and cloke of asserting *Religion* and the *Church*. Lastly, that they

would aim at peace and not revenge. For how seemly soever the present carriage of Disputes may be accounted in persons of another Character, yet it is very ill-becoming those who are stiled *Embassadors of Reconciliation*, and who ought to express the Emphasis of that Title, in reconciling mens Wills with their Duties, and their Understandings with the Truth; in bringing the wicked to repentance, and the malitious to Charity; and to win all to a holy compliance with the Designe and Rule of the B. Author of Christianity; which was, to heighten our Conversation to the most elevated pitch of true Vertue, Peace and Holiness; And that our Righteousness should exceed all theirs that ever went before us.

CHAP.

Chap. IX.

The just matter and subject of Controversie in Religion examined. How by Catechising, and not Dispute, we are therein to be reconciled.

And not only the present conduct of Disputes render them unsutable Medicines for our Disease; but also the things concerning Religion, which can with any Reason be pretended to be the matter thereof. Now, whatever in Religion can be pretended to be disputable, must either respect its dress and ornaments, or its body and essential parts; the exteriour appendages, or the Principles of Religion. If the Scruple, or the Di-

spute, be about the dress, outward rites, circumstances and fashion of Religion: then no contrivance seems more rational, or method more probable to assoil and remove it, than a due Catechizing and instructing the scrupulous in the indispensible duties of the Fifth Commandment, and to tender him a plain Scheme of the obligation that lies upon his Conscience; *To honour and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him: to submit himself to all his Teachers, Spiritual Pastors and Masters.*

How the *Supreme Powers* have Authority in the externals of Religion.

How in Religion things indifferent in themselves may pass into a Law, which ought to be obeyed, as much as any Laws in indifferent things which relate

to

to the good of the Civil State.

How things of never so low a stature, or indifferent concernment, having once received the image and superscription of a Law, ought to be obey'd, both for the sake of God & Conscience.

How it can no way comply with the design of Government, to make good their Institutions by dint of Argument: For if Authority were obliged to satisfie every medling and capricious *Brain*, they would have little or no time left, to be obeyed, *&c.* And when indiscretion of zeal, or pride of Wit, engage to vindicate every thing that is lawfully commanded, it is to have a better opinion of our own, than the Magistrates prudence; to think our Arguments will be more prevailing than their Commands; or that the former

were requisite to support the later, *&c.*

That these and the like things are proper for Catechism, and thereby the most gently and indiscernably to be infused, none I presume will gainsay. For they naturally fall in with those truths which belong to our Duty toward man, of which we must be duly informed, ere we can therein be exact.

If the Dissenter yield an obedient ear to this Instruction, there will be little fear of his continuing scrupulous to obey what his Superiours have a just power and right to enjoyn: If he do not hearken, then let him be devoted to the Civil Power, and leave the Magistrates to vindicate their own Authority; and to make that be done for *wrath*, which would not for *Conscience*. And I am tempted to

to think, that if at the *Happy restauration* this way had been pursued, we long ere this had been sensible of its good effects. And I will add this moreover, That if the Orthodox Clergy, ever since God wonderfully restored them, had devoted the greatest share of their pains to plain Expositions and Paraphrases of the Church-Catechism, they might long before this have gently gained both upon their Opinions and affections, who (by the indiscretion of other Methods) seem to be now alienated beyond retrieve. Conscience of Obedience will answer all the scruples of minds disposed to peace; and for the turbulent, let them be answer'd with Rods and Axes.

The next thing that can be disputed in Religion, besides its dress and exteriour adherencies,

are its *Body* or *Principles*, such I mean, as are absolutely necessary to Salvation; for we need be solicitous for no more than what will save us. Now these are both few and plain. For as for those numerous places of Scripture, or Notices of Oral Tradition, which are dark and difficult, they are no further necessary to be understood in their primitive intention and meaning, than that we sincerely believe, that whatsoever God thereby meant and intended, is infallibly true.

And things thus truly necessary, are as few as plain: St. *Paul* has reduced them to two Articles: To believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of all them that come unto him. And to whom only thus much is given, it shall not be damnable that they believe no more. And if this

(as

(as it seems to) be the lowest degree of Faith, God will therewith be pleased, if the means be wanting of rising higher. *Cornelius* in *Acts* 10. who because of his Alms and Prayers was accepted of God, had not been safe in that state, had he gone no further, after God had sent St. *Peter* to inform him what he was to do more. The Charities & Devotions performed in the time of his Jewish Proselytism, how far they might have stood him in stead, had he been vouchsafed no farther *Illumination*, is not the Question; yet if he had staid there, when means of going farther was afforded him; or if he had refused to believe in Christ after a sufficient Revelation, he had then justly incurr'd the condemnation of loving *darkness* more than *light*, when light was come unto him.

These instances are usual in this matter; and tell us plainly, That as few Articles are of absolute necessity, yet that their number is not the same unto all: Some more, some less, as God hath given to every man. All that is necessary for a man to believe, which for that purpose is sufficiently revealed unto him, and which God requires him to believe and practise. But there is none can set down how much every man should believe, no more than he can set down how much every man should eat.

But if notwithstanding this paucity and plainness of the Principles of Religion, any should therein be still contentious, this evil is not to be removed by Disputation, but plain Catechizing; whereby the Mysteries of Faith, and the Duties of holy life are

to

to be explained. For Catechism is a brief and plain Institution appointed for that end. And it takes care that the Principles of Religion be made so easie, that the meanest capacity may apprehend them; and yet in so concise and short a manner, that the weakest memory may not thereby be surcharged.

CHAP.

Chap. X.

Disputation unfit for the capacity of the generality of Dissenters : Catechizing proper, &c. Reasons against Disputes.

IN the last place, it will not a little import the clearing of the present subject, to enquire into the Nature of Disputes, and their Capacities who should thereby be wrought upon. As to the former, it will suffice to observe, that Disputation must be guided by *Terms* and *Rules* of *Art*, which when managed with the greatest plainness whereof they are capable, fall short of that obviousness & familiarity which is natural to Ca-

Catechizing. And as to the later, it is very remarkable, 1. That the Vulgar and common People make incomparably the greater number of *Dissenters*. 2. That the Understandings of such are usually heavy, gross and dull, as symbolizing with their Callings and conditions; and by consequent, are unable to comprehend any profound and learned Conclusions. And what is yet more considerable, the greatest part of Dissenters have no clear understanding of the very errors which a *Logical Disputation* would confute. The most of them being ignorant of their own Opinions, and of the things against which they have imbib'd a secret and spiteful prejudice. For it was, and is still the policie of those who seduce the Vulgar into Faction and Schism, not to acquaint them

them further with the Opinions they were to abet, than to let them see that they were contrary to what they disliked in the Church. Insomuch that the poor Vulgar being deluded into *Separation*, retain but a very confused and imperfect Notion of what with great impetuousness they strive both for and against. And therefore it must needs be a very Melancholy enterprise, to go to confute their errors with depth of Argument, who are in a great measure ignorant of the very errors themselves, and who do not distinctly know the opinions whereof they are to be convinced. The case of such people much resembling theirs, whom St. *Paul* thought to stand in need of Milk, and not of strong Meat; of a *Catechism* and not a *Controversie*; and to be taught Christianity

stianity from the very beginning. And the same Author being to confute those miscreant Heretiques, who said the Resurrection was already past, and thereupon gave themselves to lewd living; he did it not with the heat and briskness of a Disputant, but with the gravity and moderation of an Apostle: And having barely and calmly named the wild Opinions, he positively and plainly laid down those Truths that confronted them, 2 *Tim.* 11. 18, 19. And he would have the Gnostique Heretiques to be encountred with Ecclesiastick Censures or Discipline, and not Disputings, *whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmises*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 4, 5. *Tit.* 3. 10.

If we were to set down the several *Confessions* of the *Perswasions* of all the Christians in the world,

world, they will be found to agree in more than is purely and simply necessary to salvation. And it may seem very vain to dispute and quarrel about the rest. And therefore the whole business may be resolved into a diligent, sincere & plain *Instruction*, how we ought to practise what we all acknowledge to be true; and to fall close to doing those duties which are unquestionable, and of universal acceptance. To perform what in Baptism we vowed, and live what we profess to believe. To make our selves fit to be justified, and not waste time in controverting all the particulars that are made to relate to Justification. There is a knowledge in Religion which many earnestly pursue, without which thousands have enter'd into happiness. We need seek for no more therin, than will perform the great

work

work of salvation, and bring us to the *end of our hope*. And all this is either most assuredly to be had in our own *Catechism*, or we have been most dangerously imposed upon.

But before we dismiss this Topick, there are a few things more, chiefly relating to the persons to be converted; which methinks ought to give Catechising precedencie of Controversie in that affair. And the first is the long standing of the errors: For if the person has suckt them in with his milk, and been therewith at the first season'd, then there is education in the case, upon whose account alone not a few stick close both to truth and falshood: and if their Ancestors have lived and died, and they have been brought up in such a perswasion, it is, and indeed ought to be,

hard

hard to remove it. One main reason why the Pagans were so backward to entertain Christianity, was its enjoyning them to renounce those Institutions wherein they had been educated, and their Fore-fathers had lived, and thought themselves secure and happy. And *Trypho* derided *Justin Martyr* for a man of an easie Perswasion, and too much inconstancie, because he forsook *Plato* and embraced Christ. And *Cæcilius* in *Minutius Fœlix*, would have his *Antistes Veritatis*, a firm adherent to the Principles which his Ancestors had delivered him. And they whose pens were so excellently employed in confutation of Paganism, have generally complained that their greatest sweat was to pull down the *strong hold* of Education; it being become the last refuge of

of Gentilism, out of which they would not be driven: For they resolutely retained what they had received from their Ancestors. For both *Jew* and *Mahumetan* are at this day of the same Opinion: For the former makes prescription his Religion; and thinks it enough to outface all Arguments brought against it, because so many Rabbies live and die therein. And the later has recourse to his Education, and thinks himself secure in what he doth, because he follows the footsteps of those many Generations that went before him. Indeed, all men are willing to die in the Religion wherein they were born. And *Cæcilius*'s *Prioribus credere* goes far with Christians, as well as others; the first seasoning being incomparably more prevailing than any second.

Now,

Now, if those evil Opinions are to be removed, in which we have been educated; it can never be so well accomplished by tearing them down with the strength of Logick, as by instilling such easie Principles, necessary and uncontroverted points, with simplicity and plainness, as of themselves will subvert the errors of the first Instruction, and become the foundation of future Peace and Truth. And no way of teaching can so naturally be hereunto entituled as Catechizing. For as to Disputation, it is generally had under a jealous aspect, as being thought subtle and reaching, and intended rather to celebrate a Triumph, than than to effect a Conversion; and to advance the Disputer, not the Truth. Besides, it being so apt to mingle and blend with captious So-

Sophisms, and false but specious ways of *proving*, that men are ready to account it Imposture, not Conviction, that by such means is effected. And as for Preaching, a new Chapter will manifestly make it appear not to be so proper for this purpose as most imagine. But in Catechizing there is such an honest simplicity, clear and plain way of procedure, that none can therein suspect any Sophism or *artificial dealing*, disguises or shadowings.

In the next place, most men are either so modest in the apprehension of their own abilities, or so fearful to be ensnared in the great concerns of Religion, that they are unwilling to depend upon their own judgments in those instances especially which they see are most disputed and questioned. And therefore

they

they think it no sufficient Reason to forsake an Opinion, because they cannot answer all the Objections which by the subtle Advocate of a different Perswasion are brought against it. And so long as a man can really believe that there are others who can answer what is objected against his Opinion, he will never quit it, because he cannot answer it himself. For to think an Argument cannot be answered, because not by me, were to think the Lady must be carried by none, because neither A. nor B. can win her; as if there were no more men in the world sufficient for that purpose, but they two.

But if Disputation should be able to force men from these refuges, and to cast away the groundless Opinions they embrace; yet if their Opinions twist

twist with some worldly interest, and yield any secular advantage; if the Opiniatres can say, *By this craft we get our wealth*; then great is *Diana*, and your Argument is answered.

And he who considers how many temporal ends men serve with their Opinions, will have little hope to confute them, at least by a way which is so generally suspected.

If the Opinion please the humour of an eating avarice, or a swelling ambition; and bring either wealth or honour.

If it make its Abettors notorious for singularity, or get them a Vogue of being more holy and Religious than their Neighbours.

If it place them in the pretended number of Sufferers and Persecuted.

If

If it gratifie their ſpleen, and give them but a more *plauſible pretence* to be *ſtubborn, refractory, contradicting* of Authority, gainſayers of the eſtabliſhed Religion, *&c.* then the cure muſt begin with the affections and not the judgment; and therefore a Diſpute is no fit preſcription. All that by Argument can be effected, before the *paſſion* be duly chaſtiſed, will but bring the Opinioniſt to this: I ſee and approve the better, but follow the worſe; my *Paſſions* are too powerful for my *Reaſon*.

We might here alſo add, how Quarrels in Chriſtian Religion contradict the errand whereon it was ſent into the world, which was for love and peace; to reconcile men to God, and among themſelves. And if it yield contrary fruits, they come as the tares

tares among the wheat, by the craft and malice of the wicked One. For strifes and Controversies are no more the effects of Religion, than of the Law: were all men just and honest, we needed not disturb the ashes of a moth-eaten Statute; and had we no self-ends and interests, no base passions and designs, the itch of Disputation would not disquiet and make us so restless.

Before we close up this Chapter, it will not be much impertinent to observe how Disputation was at first opening of the Reformation an excellent engine to advance it: And we find that the Reformers made importunate suits for publique Audience & Judgment; and the offer of open Disputation greatly assured the people of the soundness of their cause, when they saw they were ready to put it upon publike tryal. And more

may be supposed to have followed the first Essays of the Reformation out of an Opinion that it was good and true, being defended with such freedom, simplicity and assurance, than by the strength of those Arguments which were at first brought to assert it. But then it is to be considered that the Reformers offer'd this kind of tryal to those with whom they began to be at no less distance, than with members of a distinct and different Communion; and in places where they were in hope to gain, but in no danger to loose Proselytes. For they wisely invaded the Adversary in his own Country, and challenged him to a Dispute in his own *Cities*, and in the throng of his Adherents. But upon how different terms Disputes can now be managed, either with Dissenters

ters, or the common Enemy, I leave the truly considerate to determine. But since we are resolved to fight, I could wish our valour were more discreet, than to encounter the Enemy within our own bowels; to controvert our Religion in the place where it is legally established. A thing not heard of in other Countries, where there is a greater peace and more outward Religion. But I shall close up this Topick with setting down what is usually observed upon this subject, *viz.*

1. That Religion is like neither to get nor save by Disputes. 2. That Disputes on this subject may have the ill-luck to make some suspect the truth of all Religion, because it is so much controverted. For weaker heads seeing the roof totter, are apt to

ſuſpect there is no firmneſs in the foundation; and to conclude nothing is certain, if any thing be queſtion'd. 3. That in ſo great a miſt of Diſputes, many may grow halting & luke-warm, and think it their only ſafety to ſtand ſtill, or ſit down in neutrality. 4. That for one ſin Diſputes have cured, they have begot innumerable. 5. That the ſtrength and practice of Religion have been ſenſibly impaired, ſince by the diſtemper'd heats of men's ſpirits it hath been rarified into ſubtil Controverſies. 6. That ſuſpence of judgment, and exerciſe of Charity were ſafer and ſeemlier for Chriſtian men, than the hot purſuit of thoſe Controverſies, wherein they that are moſt fervent to Diſpute, are not always the moſt able to determine. But what is more natural to the preſent purpoſe, it ſhould ſeem ouſ-

ously be considered, That the people are neither to be confuted of their false, nor established in the true Notices of Religion, by *Doubtful Disputes*, but *plain Catechistical Doctrines*. And as to our selves of this Church, seeing there can come nothing of our Contentions, but the mutual waste of the parties contending, till a common enemy dance in the ashes of us both; I shall ever wish, and most heartily pray, that the strict commands of Peace and Unity, so frequent in the Gospel, may at the last so prevail in this Nation, to the burying and utter oblivion of strife, together with the causes that have either bred or brought it up: That things of small moment never disjoyn them, whom one God, one Lord, one Faith, one Spirit, one Baptism, bands of so great force, have

linked together. That a respe-
spective eye towards things wherewith we should not be disquieted, make us not unable to speak peaceably one to another. Finally, that no strife may ever be heard of again, but who shall hate strife most, and pursue peace with the swiftest paces.

CHAP.

Chap. XI.

Preaching, what it is: the several ways thereof used by the Church. What kind of Preaching among the Old Jews, and Primitive Christians. The Homilies considered.

HAving in the antecedent Chapter discharged Disputes and Controversies from being any fitable and proper means of reducing the Dissenters of our own Church, or winning the members of the Roman: The next thing pretending to our healing is Preaching, which I here take to be, *An open, solemn and Authoritative publication of*

Divine Myſteries. And this the Church doth two ſeveral ways: 1. As a Witneſs. 2. As an Expoſitor.

And firſt, The Church Preacheth as a Withneſs, by publike reading the ſacred Scriptures, and by relating and teſtifying the Divine Truths which God in the inſpired Volumes hath conſigned her. And that this is no ſpurious ſenſe of Preaching, we have him to aſſure us, who well underſtood the ſenſe and importance both of the *word* and *thing*. For in *Acts* 15. 21. the reading of *Moſes* in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day, is by St. *Paul* in the genuine and native ſignification of the word, ſtyled Preaching. That this Preaching of *Moſes*, was a naked reading of his Law, we have a whole cloud of Expoſitors to atteſt it, beſides the clear-

clearneſs of the thing it ſelf. But I cannot be of their judgment who aſſert, that neither the Ancient nor Modern Jews had any ſuch thing as weekly Preaching upon any part of the Law of *Moſes*, and that upon this ground ſolely conclude the preaching of *Moſes* to be meer reading. For we find that the Old Jews had divers men among them, who uſed to contribute their Talents to the Expoſition of the Leſſon that was read: and theſe in ordinary courſe were the Sons or Scholars of the Prophets, who were trained up in learning of the Law, and at the age of thirty received the title of Doctors; and till they obtained the Grace of immediate Inſpiration, or the Spirit of Propheſie, they continued to expound the Scriptures (not by Revelation, but) according to

that knowledge which the ordinary blessing of God upon their Studies was able to compass. Answerable whereunto (as some think) was that custom among the Christians, mentioned, 1 *Cor.* 14. 29. And also those Disciples of the Prophets of the N. T. called Doctors, because they were admitted to teach in the Church. But for mine own part, I rather understand the word Doctor in St. *Paul* of all such Presbyters as had abilities of Preaching and Teaching the people in their Assemblies. And that Presbyters & Doctors were all one, we may conclude from *Tertull. de Prescript. c.* 3. *Quid ergò si Episcopus*, &c. What then if a Bishop, if a Deacon, if a Widow, a Virgin, if a Doctor, if even a Martyr shall fall from the Rule? In this Catalogue of principal Ecclesiastique

ſtique Orders, Preſbyters muſt be underſtood by Doctors, unleſs we will deny them to have any room among the chief ranks of the Church; which were both falſe and abſurd. And that inceſtuous perſon with an Opinion of whom the *Corinthians* were puft up, was (as is obſerved out of *Chryſoſtom* and *Theodoret*) one of their Doctors, that is, one of the Preſbyters of that Church, that exerciſed the Office of Preaching, and by that means bore a great ſway among the people.

But to return to the *reading of Moſes*, which began with the Moral Service of the Synagogue; when we finde that the Moſaical Law was diſtinguiſhed into Diviſions anſwerable to the Number of Weeks in the year, that the whole Law in that ſpace

might

might be read over : correſpondent to which Leſſons out of the Law, there were others out of the Prophets : one of which the Holy Jeſus took for his ſubject at *Nazareth*, when after the manner of the Jewiſh Doctors he made his Expoſition, St. *Luke* 4.16. And he did the like, St. *Mat.* 9.35. where he is ſaid to teach [διδάσκειν] in the Synagogue; which might be done without any pretenſion to ſuch Authority as was ſuppoſed in κήρυσσειν, in Preaching; which in the Chriſtian uſe of the word in the N.T. differs from Teaching. Chriſt did both St. *Mat.* 9.35. He taught the Law, and preacht the Goſpel: At thirty years old he expounded *Moſes*, as a Doctor (before which time the ancient Church made none Presbyters) and at the ſame time he preacht the Goſpel of the King

Kingdom. But still the matter is plain enough, that the bare reading of *Moses* in the Synagogues, is Preaching in the proper meaning; which sort of Preaching is still practised in the appointed Lessons of the Church. The former out of the Old Testament being derived like many wholesom things from the Synagogue; and the second Lesson out of the N. Testament, which was appointed, as most suppose, by the 16th Canon of the Council of *Laodicea*, celebrated in the year of Grace 364. Albeit *Justin Martyr* (who lived in the second Age) seems to give the Lessons an elder date. For in his second Apology, he tells us, how all those who abide in Cities and the adjacent Countries, meet in one place, on the day called Sunday; and the Ἀπομνημονεύματα, the Memoires and Records

cords of the Apostles, together with the τὰ συγγράμματα, the Writings of the Prophets are read unto them, as far as the time and occasion serves: And that the Reader ceasing, the President in a Speech makes an Exhortation that they would imitate those good things which had been read. From which it is evidently to be concluded, that the Church in the first and best Ages of Christianity preacht as a witness, when she read, and thereby attested the truth of the Holy Scriptures. And all men are in some degree capable thereby to be edified. For there is none understands the Scriptures so well, but he may improve by hearing them read in the Church. And if we look into the efficacie of the *Word*, it is wonderful that it should be less as it is read, than as it

it is expounded; seeing that the one is the Word of God as it was inspired by the Holy Ghost, and the other can no farther be so accounted, than as it keeps close to the sense and meaning thereof; which is not so easie, so long as men are subject to errors and mistakes, and have base ends to serve, and carnal circumstances to be accomplished.

2. But because all men ought to have such a knowledge in God's Word as may be sufficient to Salvation; and because all will not attain to so much by bare reading thereof, therefore the Church Preacheth as an Expositor, by discovering and explaining what in Sacred Scripture is mysterious and obscure; and by a seasonable application of those things which are more obvious and evident. And in this sense

Preaching

Preaching is an Office in our own Church, which cannot be too highly magnified, nor too frequently celebrated, if it be agreeable to those Homilies which were intended, not only to supply those who have not the Gift of Preaching, sufficiently to instruct the people committed to their Cure; but also to be a wholesom Rule by which even those who are able to preach should guide themselves in that publike Ministery.

But if Discourses at this day made in Pulpits ought only so far forth to be accounted Preaching, as they are agreeable to the Churches Sermons; then all is not Preaching which bears that Name, and takes up the circumstances thereunto allowed.

In the pious Sermons of the Church, we finde Principles of Chri-

Christianity solidly explained, Rules and Motives of honest and holy life clearly laid down, & Perorations and Perswasions to continue therein, devoutly and charitably directed and applied. I shall notdraw this into comparison; but only say, That I hope there is none need think it any diminution or disparagement to his parts and learning, to write after such a Copy. And however the Homilies may be decried through popular ignorance, prejudice and passion, yet no doubt but they are still necessary upon their first designe, which was to help the inabilities of some, to restrain the indiscretions of others, and to take away those strifes about what is fitting to be preacht, caused by the variety of mens judgments, the extravagance of their Fancies, and the

the Byaſſes of ſeveral Intereſts.

And as for the Homilies of this Church, they deſerve a much better eſteem than generally they receive; and would need no elaborate Vindication, if duly conſidered in their circumſtances. For in the firſt place, they are to be looked upon as popular Sermons, fitted unto the Capacities and Conditions of the Vulgar; Who being more led by Paſſion than Reaſon, have need of ſuch Diſcourſes, as will rather regulate their will, than inform their judgment. They ſtanding in more need to have their hearts and Conſciences wrought upon for good life and Converſation, than their underſtanding and apprehenſion with any curious piece of Learning or Science. And that the greateſt ſhare of the Church

Church-Homilies deals herein, there will need no other proof than their diligent peruſal.

In the ſecond place, The Church-Homilies are not to be looked upon as her Dogmatical Reſolutions and Poſitions, but as they contain Godly and wholeſome Doctrine [Teaching] and neceſſary for the times when they were compoſed. For ſo much we are taught in the 35 Article. And therefore I humbly ſuppoſe, that every paſſage in the Homilies is not to be preſſed for the Faith and Doctrine of the Church, but that the whole ought to be conſidered as confronting the evil Opinions and Manners that at their compoſing were held and practiſed: and if ought of either be remaining, the Homilies may ſtill be needful upon their Primitive account.

In

In the last place, the very time in wch the Homilies were compiled may excuse many a period therein. For our Ancestors were lately come out of Popery, & conversed daily with Persons of that Perswasion; and therefore severe dehortations were requisite to preserve them from Apostacie into those Practises out of which they had so lately been recovered: which makes it no wonder if enforcements and Exhotations to that purpose, *&c.* are sometime too hardly stretched. And as for mine own part, I am so far from undervaluing the pious Sermons of the Church, that considering their circumstances, I greatly esteem them for their own *worth*, and respect them above any other for their *Authority*.

And as to those who reject Homilies upon the account that Apo-

Apocryphal Writings are not to be used in the Church, it may suffice briefly to reply,

1. That Apocryphal Writings were publikely read in the Church in Primitive times: as the Epistle of *Clemens* in that of *Corinth.*

2. That *Hermes* (the same whom S. *Paul* saluted, *Rom.* 16. 14.) his *Pastor* was publikely read in the Churches, and used by some of the most ancient Writers, and thought highly necessary. *Vide Euseb. l.3. c.3.* What may be said to this purpose of the στοιχειώδη συγγράμματα of *Theophilus* B. of *Antioch*, I leave to the judgment of others. *Vid. Euseb. l.4. c.23.*

3. That in the Reformed Churches (not long since) *Calvins* Sermons upon *Job* were publikely read, by which means (saith

(saith *Beza* in his Preface to those Sermons) the want of Preachers was supplied.

4. That it is all one to the people, whether the Sermon was made and Printed in 1587, or on the last Sunday-Eve; whether it be out of a Book, or *ex tempore* of the Brain, if thereby they be truly edified. The Council of *Vaus* appointed the Homilies of the Fathers to be read by the Deacons in those Churches, where the Presbyters through infirmity were absent. *Concil. Vassu. c.* 4. *Vid.* Mr. *Hooker* Eccles. Pol. *lib.* 5.

5. That there is more security in a *Homily* than a *Lecture*; as there is in the learning, piety and discretion of many, than a single person. In short: there can be no mischief in the word [Homilies] seeing the best Sermons (S. *Chry-*

Chryſoſtoms) that ever were writ by any but an enſpired Pen, bear that Title. *Homileticus* and *Tractator* are often uſed indifferently: and the later is ſufficiently known to ſignifie a Preacher, as *Tractare* to Preach, among the Writers of the Latin Church. And the Expoſition *Auguſtine* made upon St. *John* is called *Tractatus*, *&c.* And the Reaſon of the name, was the handling of the Scriptures that had been read; the cuſtom being to Expound or Preach upon ſuch Portions of Scripture as were appointed for the Leſſons of the day; as hath been obſerved out of *Juſtin Martyrs* ſecond Apology. Something of this has been in uſe with our own Church, when the Sermon was ſpent in preſſing the intention of the Goſpel for ſuch a day unto the people; which is ſtill the

the cuſtom of the Romaniſts.

But leaving every one to his own ſentiment herein, I cannot perceive why in ſtead of vilifying the old Homilies, we ſhould not rather deſire a ſupply of *new ones*: ſuch as may contain a familiar Orthodox inſtruction in the whole Body of Chriſtian Doctrine, and of all the capital Duties therein required; That thereby an Uniform way of inſtruction might be maintained; as no unlikely means both to regain and preſerve Peace and Unity in this Church.

But without further purſuing the notion of Preaching, we will here underſtand it in the moſt troden and common acception namely, as *A way of inſtructing the people contradiſtinct to Catechizing*; and to which it *ſtands in uſual compariſon as ſtrong mea*

meat to milk. Now that Preaching in this obvious sense is no proper means to recover us of our Dissentions, and to beget in us a sober and fixed judgment in the things of Religion (as it is generally supposed) comes to be made manifest in this following Chapter.

Chap. XII.

Preaching insufficient to restore our Dissentions: Catechizing proper for that purpose, &c. *A Scruple removed.*

That Difference which Divines make of things necessary to Salvation, either as a *Means* without which it cannot be had at all, or as *Commands* without whose observation those cannot be saved to whom those Commands are given, might have place here, if we were to speak of Preaching, as by some it is looked upon, for an instrument without which not one poor Soul can be delivered from destruction

ſtruction, nor any Sabbath hallowed either by Prieſt or people as God requireth. Which was the Opinion of *T. C.* and is ſtill of his Proſelytes. But it belongs not to the purport of this *Diſcourſe*, to ſet down how far *Preaching* (in the common Notice) is neceſſary, as a means of Salvation: For then we muſt deſcend to particular perſons, in reſpect of whom the true value of its *neceſſity* muſt be taken, ſeeing that none will ſay it can be alike neceſſary to the Salvation of all.

There is none ſhall give more to the worth & neceſſity of Preaching, and be more frequent therein than my ſelf. But yet I doubt not, but that a man may be ſaved without it. For if a perſon who in his Infancie hath received H. Baptiſm, at years of *Diſcernment*,

shall by *Catechism* be minded of all that he then *vowed* and *promised*, and be careful to *believe* and *do* them, I see not what such a person wants of being set in a state of Salvation, that with equal esteemers can be accounted necessary as a means thereof; though he *knew* no more of Preaching, than they in *Acts* 19. did of the Holy Ghost.

But let Preaching be a means never so necessary to save our Souls; yet that it is not so sutable & proper to reform & fix our erroneous & inconstant judgments (as is conceived) seems clear and evident upon the force and obviousness of this single instance namely, That those who have been, and still are the greatest admirers of popular Preaching and the most eager hearers of many Sermons, and the most rest-

less

less followers of several *Lecturers*, have notwithstanding all this, been, and are, (1.) The most inconstant, (2.) The most erroneous in their Opinions.

And first, as for their giddiness and unconstancie, there needs no other demonstration thereof, than their rowling from one Opinion to another. For if they have stuck fast to any one, yet that being evil, their adherence thereunto ought not to be accounted *Constancie*, but *Perverseness*.

Now if we enquire into the cause of this fickleness of judgment so notorious among the zealous Sermonists, and *Vulgar Sectaries*, we shall find that it is a want of Catechizing; and that they were never duly instructed in those primary Principles of Religion, which would have

rightly inform'd and eſtabliſhed their judgments. Through the want whereof, they have proved like unballaſted veſſels, liable to be toſſed, torn, and blown about with every guſt of contrary Doctrine, vented by thoſe who were crafty to deceive; and who have proved themſelves to be lineally deſcended of thoſe great pretenders to Godlineſs and Knowledge (mention'd in the inſpired and Eccleſiaſtique Scriptures) and egregiouſly character'd, *for creeping into houſes, and ſeducing ſilly women, who were ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth.* Vide *Euſeb.* Eccleſ. Hiſt. *lib.* 2. *lib.* 3, & 4.

Nor need it create our wonder that ſuch perſons are ſo bad proficients in Religion, ſeeing they began to learn it at the wrong

wrong end, and ran to the Lecture before they had been at the Catechism. And indeed it cannot be imagined that those should make any laudable progress either in Divine or humane Knowledge, who in the Rudiments and first grounds thereof, have had either none, or a very slight Education.

And as the most unsatiable Hearers of Sermons have proved wavering and unconstant in their judgments, for want of a timely and through Catechizing; so likewise upon the same ground they have been very erroneous and Opiniative. For this want of a plain *Institution* in the Principles of Truth, hath left them destitute of a proper Test, whereby they might be able to explore and try what is preacht, and to separate the *pretious* from the

vile. Through the want whereof, they as greedily imbibe a falſe as true Doctrine; and are ready to change their Opinions according to the impreſſion which the affectionate noiſe of the laſt Sermon has made upon their *Senſes*.

Nor are they happier in their reading H. Scriptures, than in hearing of them (thus) preacht. The un-catechized run upon the ſame rock in both. For albeit the *Divine Word* is in it ſelf the pure Fountain of all *ſaving Truths*; yet perſons not trained up in a competent apprehenſion of Catechiſtical Principles, make it a ſink of pernicious Errors; ſucking Contention from the Breſts of Peace; turning the ſincere milk of Gods Word into the poyſon of Aſps, and perverting the *Scripture* to their own deſtruction; while

while they make the Oracles of God not to speak their own, but such a sense and language, as may best adjust their Designes and *Interests.*

And as no malice proves more implacable than that which ariseth out of the ashes of an Apostate love: So no Errors are more dangerous than those which proceed from a wrong interpreting & application of *the Word of Truth.* And as those whose fancie has been playing with sounds, think every thing they hear is tunable to their fancie: So those whose minds are once infected with evil Opinions, think every Text speaks according to the Opinions wherewith they are infected. And it is an Hypothesis will meet with few Adversaries, That men who are prejudiced and prepossessed with Errors in Religion,

cannot be reduced but by getting them therein rightly principled, which was never yet attempted but by solid and perspicuous Catechizing; it being by this that men prove in Religion like the house in the Gospel founded upon a rock, which by no force of storms and winds could be subverted. And therefore if this *ground-work* be not surely laid, all *superstructures* in Religion lie upon the loose sand, and are easily washt away by the insinuating suggestions of false Teachers. And what is yet further to be considered, we see the rest of the *Building* sink with the Foundation: if that be shaken, all will go to ruine. And Christians not well grounded in the Elements of Truth and Holiness, will quickly be perswaded to give themselves up to any wild

wild Opinion, or loose practice, and turn Schismatique or Traytor, to the great hazard and confusion both of Church and State.

But if it be objected that Catechizing is a plaister too narrow for our sore, because it cannot reach those whose Age or some other circumstance excludes them the number of those for whom this sort of *Instruction* is appointed, notwithstanding they have no less need thereof than others: To this it will be enough to return the succeeding considerations, *viz.*

1. That the Church obviated this scruple, when in the last Edition of the Lyturgy, she appointed the Catechism to be learned of *every person*. And in her Fiftieth nine Canon enjoyn'd the Clergy to instruct all the ignorant

perſons of their Pariſhes in the publike Catechiſm. And that thoſe who bear the heavy load of many years might not decline this way of *Inſtitution*, they may ſee it founded in the Apoſtolical practice; which was to Catechize the adult; as before was obſerved.

2. To be duly inſtructed in the Principles of Chriſtianity, is a duty incumbent upon all, who by the *knowledge* and *Practice* thereof hope to be eternally ſaved. And therefore if the Aged be therein ignorant, they have more reaſon to bluſh at their ignorance, than to be thus inſtructed; and with diligence and humility to wait at this *Gate of Knowledge*, rather than with ſcorn to diſdain it.

3. If the Elder ſort have either not been taught at all, or have

have forgot the chief Heads and Catechetical Fundamentals of Christianity, they now meet with a fair occasion both to learn and call them to minde. For by being present and attentive in hearing the Younger Catechized, the Ancient (and all) may be brought to know what they do not understand, to remember what they have forgot, and to be inform'd in what they have erred. So that at the same time Catechizing will instruct the *Ignorant*, remember the *Forgetful*, and inform the *Erronious* : And therefore administer a Physick proper and sutable to our several Maladies; which cannot be pretended to by those other Methods, that have hitherto been so eagerly pursued.

Chap. XIII.

The Benefits of Catechizing, 1. *In respect of the* Civil State. 2. *The Clergy.* 3. *The People. The Mischiefs of private Schools. Objections against the constant practice of Catechizing removed.*

But besides what has been discourſed, there are other *good Effects* of Catechizing which at leaſt may be as ſo many motives to enforce its practice.

And in the firſt place, Catechizing is in an eminent manner conducive to the Peace and Welfare of the State; becauſe it takes care that the Younger ſort, who

who are the hopes of a Nation, be duly educated in those Principles, on whose practice the safety and happiness of a State depends. For to sowe in the pure minds of *Youth* the seeds of Vertue and Truth, before the Tares of Vice and Error, and the weeds of the *World*, have canker'd and spoiled the Soil, is by the consent of all wise men, a point of incomparable force and moment for the well-ordering and Government of all kinde of Societies, and for making Commonwealths ever flourishing and happy. For by the means of Catechizing, the Younger sort will be planted and grow up in a due Conformity and Obedience to the Laws in being; which is undeniably a proper expedient to uphold *States* in the Terms wherein they are, and to free them

them from the danger of being so easily obvious to alteration and change. For the Opinions, of what nature soever, wherewith we are first season'd, are of double force to any second Perswasions and *Usages*. And this makes the Spanish Nation early and careful in Catechizing their Children; by which Method (ever since its use) they have not suffer'd the least *disturbance* and *alteration* in Church or *State*. That *serious people* having largely experienced the Truth of their own saying: *No es menos importante el ser de la Doctrina que el de la Naturaleza.* And in confirmation of this remark, it were easie to load the Margin with a numerous Quotation, and the line with a tedious recital of many excellent Passages out of *Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Seneca, Tacitus,*

citus, *Agell.* and almost all the learned Heathen: *Plutarch's* Education of Children doth abridge them all. But we need not go sharpen our tools with the Philistines, seeing an Israelite can do it better. For *Solomon* is plain, That the way to have men Religious and honest; to be peaceable both in Church and State; is from their Childhood to train them up (the Margin) to Catechize them, in the Duties that they owe unto both. *Prov.* 22. 6. And the Ecclesiastick & Politick Parents, as well as the Natural, will finde great safety in observing the wise advice of *Ben Sirach. Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat on the sides while he is a childe; lest he wax stubborn, and disobedient, and so bring sorrow to thine heart.* Eccluſ. 30. 12. But there needs hereof

hereof neither illustration nor enlargement. And therefore we shall close this *Period* with that excellent Spaniard, *Son los afetos en la Ninez como el Veneno*, &c. Vices in youth are as poyson, which if it once take seisure of the heart, the paleness it introduceth no Physick can remove. *Saavedra, Idea de un prin. pol. Christ. p.* 8.

Obedience, by a Catholick agreement, is *peoples Crown* and *Pillar*, the *Glory* and *Srength* of all Government. But this Obedience can never be firm and durable, if it be not founded in Conscience. For according to the information of *this*, we shall find the expresses of the *other*. And notwithstanding that unparallel'd Villanies have been every where acted under the pretence of Conscience, yet this is so far from making

ing it reaſonable to neglect and leride Conſcience, that it ſhould ngage us by all good means to ave it ſo regulated and inſtruct-d, that it may be no leſs ſervice-ble to Peace and Union, than it ath been (the pretence) to carry n Diſſention and Schiſm. And ve need not doubt but a right Conſcience will as powerfully blige to *Peace*, as an erroneous nſtigate to Sedition: And that men were once fully Catechi-ed in the Duties of the *Second able*, they would no longer be ble to reſiſt the Eccleſiaſtick or ecular Power under the *Banner* f Conſcience.

In the ſecond place, an Una-imous uſe of Catechizing the eople in the ſame things, will ot a little redound to the cre-t of the Clergy. For by this eans they will teſtifie to the world

world their *Harmony* and *Consent*: That they all teach the same things; and are not, as for lack hereof some imagine, like the Naturalists two-headed Serpent, pulling contrary ways, but all looking on the same Objects as the Seraphims on the Mercy-Seat.

And doubtless one end of the Church-Catechism was to preserve an Uniform procedure in teaching the Common ground of Religion. It being requisite and convenient, that they who profess but one God, one Christ, one Baptism, and one Gospel should consent and be trained up in one Catechism. The inconvenience arising from the use of divers, being observed by Pope *Clemens* the Eighth, caused him to have a Catechism compiled which, exclusive of all other

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hould be taught in all thoſe Countries that call themſelves Catholick. *Ut ſublatâ modorum docendi varietate, uniforme, faciliusq; inſtruendi idiotas & ſimplices de rebus fidei exercitium reddatur*; ſaith the *Congregatio Reformationis*, which reviſed and approved it.

And in the *Geneva* Lyturgy, we finde their Paſtors limited not only to the ſame Catechiſm, but alſo to how much thereof they ſhall teach every *Lords day*, without any interpolations of their own. A thing which ought carefully to be provided for in our own Church: For if the Clergy be either left to a liberty of uſing divers Catechiſms, or to uſe the Churches as they pleaſe; and under a pretence of the *legal Inſtruction*, take a more ſecure occaſion to inſtil into the minds

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of the unwary people their own Opinions and Phanſies, they may moſt malitiouſly deceive the intention of the Church, and ſo feeding, poyſon their *Congregations*. They will prove falſe to their truſt, and moſt perniciouſly contradict the Name they bear. For the Clergy are Catechiſts in the moſt important ſenſe of their Office, and are bound by that Title not to ſound their own words, but to Eccho and repeat what the Church has ſpoken, not only the words and ſyllables, but the ſenſe and meaning.

But if the Clergy were never ſo unanimous and diligent both in the interpretation and practice of the Catechiſm, the benefit thereof will not be ſo viſible, while there are thoſe who unteach in private what is taught at Church, Wch is the undermining practice

of many of those *Petite* Schools, wherewith the Nation is surcharged and abused. The most whereof being subservient to no better end than to give the *Youth* an ill-seasoning as well in the Rudiments of Religion as Grammar. And albeit the redressing of this mischief has been piously recommended by the Sovereign Head of this Church, to *Persons* proper for that purpose; yet it is to be feared that the issue will be rather an *Encrease* of *Licences*, than any *Abatement of undue School-Teachers*, contrary to the 77 & 79 Canons.

Till *Israel* wanted Smiths of their own, they never went to the Philistims to sharpen their mattocks. It seems no less a want of Policie than Affection in the Church, while her own brests are full to suffer her Children to suck

ſuck ſuch Nurſes, as with their milk will infuſe *Diſobedience* against her.

The Jeſuites uſually ſay, That they never doubt to replant their Religion, where they have once planted a Colledge; becauſe this being obtained, they will have opportunity to inſtruct the Youth (which is an employment they every where labour to engroſs to their Society) whereby they ſeal not but in time to eat out the fathers *Principles* with thoſe they ſhall inſtil into the ſon. And the preſent ſtate of affairs will eaſily turn this into no unſeaſonable Alluſion.

But in the laſt place, the unanimous uſage of the ſame Church Catechiſm, and the modd'ling ordering and directing all publike Inſtructions according to

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his *Form of sound Words*, will bring no less safety to the people, than Honour to the Clergy. For by this means the people will be delivered from the fear and peril of hearing contrary Doctrines, and consequently be edified and built up in such an Uniformity both of *Belief* and *Manners*, as may at once secure as well their Conversations as Judgments from Ungodliness and Error; which yields a fair probability of closing our present *breaches*, and preventing future.

And now seeing that the welfare of the State, the credit of the Clergy, and safety of the people do greatly importune and sollicite the practice of Catechizing; there is nothing on the Clergies part that can retard it, but what I should be loath to name or imagine. But if it be

ſaid in behalf of the Laity, Tha
Catechizing being a conſtant re
petition of the ſame thing, will ſ
cloy the people, that they wi
grow weary of Gods Houſe; to w
we ſee them ſufficiently backward
even when they are there enter
tained with variety; Then I ſha
only wiſh all thoſe of the Hol
Function maturely to conſider,

1. How low they have ſun
in their eſteem with the peopl
ſince their Office was ſo muc
devoted to pleaſe *their* humour

2. That they ought not
much to reſpect the peoples fa
cies, as proficiencie in Religion
the informing of their judg
ments, and directing their Co
ſciences, and not the humouri
of their caprices, ought to be the
chief aim and travel.

3. That they cannot deſer
the Name of Guides, who are r
le

ed by those whom they should
ule : the issue whereof will be
o better than that of *The blinde*
eading, &c.

4. That if Catechizing be a
way of Instruction, which will
est preserve the Unity and
eace of the Church, and most
olidly and securely advance the
dification of the people ; then
here is no need to be sollicitous
or any other ends or interests.

5. And as for the constant re-
etition and audience of the same
ruths necessary to Salvation
as they are the Contents of the
hurch-Catechism) it may be
istified by that old saying [*Nun-*
uam satis docetur, quod nunquam
atis discitur ;] Those Lessons
an never be too much taught,
hich can never be too much
earned. For repetition in this
ase is to make the Catechism,

what indeed it is, the words o
the wise fastened like nails b
the Masters of Assemblies. An
though in all the blows of th
hammer the act be the same, ye
there is no stroke superfluou
while every one tends to con
pleat the work. We may brin
the same quarrel against *readi*
Books, and *hearing Sermons*: f
they are but old matter in ne
words; and if stript of *Dress* a
Disguise, they would easily
discerned to be but so many v
ried repetitions. In Religion
any thing be pretended to
new, we may safely conclude
is *false*.

6. But to evacuate the whole C
jection, A diligent Catechist v
finde enough in the Church-C
techism to entertain his Con
gation with variety, & to deli
and profit all but *itching Ears*.

wants nothing that is requisite o defend us in our *Journey*, or to ve us when come to our *long ome*. And those who are there- n duly instructed, will finde hemselves so sufficiently guard- d, that no machinations of He- esie or Schism will be able to atter or undermine them. In- eed the diligent use of Catechi- ing will be its best Vindication, nd most effectually answer all Objections against it. And with- ut all controversie, there was ever a greater necessity of enfor- ing what we now treat of, than he conjuncture wherein we ive. For we see Satan is let loose, nd lays hard at the Souls of Christians; not only by such O- inions as disturb our Peace, but would utterly destroy our Chri- tianity. Insomuch that we have great need to speak to every one,

as that famous Anchorite to his Pillars upon the approach of an Earth-quake, *Stand fast, for ye shall be shaken :* And stand fast we cannot, if we want a sure Foundation in Religion; and this cannot be expected, where it is not laid in a full and timely Catechizing.

CHAP

Chap. XIV.

The Church-Catechism to be preferr'd before others, for its Authority, Usefulness, Accomplishment, Contents, &c.

But if after all that hath been or can be said concerning the Antiquity and Benefits of Catechizing in general, or more particularly in regard of its necessity and advantages in respect of the present Temperament of our own Nation, it should be disputed what Catechism ought to be of publike use: I shall return, first, that although there are many excellent Catechisms both in our own and forein Languages,

compoſed by private perſons, out of the conſideration of the great emolument accrewing to the people from this of Teaching: yet there is none which with thoſe of this *Communion* ought to be of equal eſteem with the Catechiſm of the Church, if we conſider, as we ought, its Authority, Uſefulneſs, and Accompliſhment.

And in the firſt place, as for its Authority, the Church-Catechiſm hath no leſs pre-eminence above others, than the Decrees of Councils above the Inſtigations of a *private Spirit*. For the difference betwixt this and Catechiſms penn'd by particular perſons, is like that between the Laws and Statutes of the Kingdom, and the advice and judgment of private Subjects.

This is not to caſt any imputation

tion or disrespect upon those Catechisms penn'd by *grave* and *learned Divines*; which are good in themselves, and useful in their station: But to shew, that the Church-Catechism commands of us a peculiar Veneration, by reason of its publike Authority.

In the next place, by vertue of its Authority, the Church-Catechism hath an especial Usefulness, in being the common Test by wch we may try who are of, or against our Communion. It is likewise an excellent Form of Religion, whereby particular persons may examine their own Opinions and Sentiments, and give an account of their *Faith* to those who would therein either *establish* or *subvert* them.

In the last place, the Accomplishment of the *Church-Catechism* greatly enhaunseth its Com-

mendation. For if its Contents fall under an upright Review, it will merit no less praise than those Compositures, which are so exact, that they are neither Defective nor Redundant. For although some have objected its deficiencie, as not taking any notice of the Great Points of Faith, Justification, Sanctification, &c. It may hereunto be truly answer'd, That these Points are rather briefly exprest, than totally omitted; and that it is not the omission, but the short and Orthodox Expression thereof, which is the ground of the Exception. But if the nature of a Catechism were rightly weighed, it would be no Objection against the Churches, that some things are therein either more darkly or more succinctly set down. For if every point of Doctrine were in

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a Catechism discuss'd at length, it would lose and forfeit its Name. But besides all this, it is easie for a *Clerk* of ordinary *industry* and *Letters* to make all those Points plain and obvious out of the *Church-Catechism*, whose want is objected against its compleatness. And we have no reason to wonder or repine, that the Church hath left some-thing to exercise the labours and Abilities of her Clergy.

But to conclude: If we maturely examine the Catechism, we shall finde therein such a natural evenness in the Method and Style, and such a consistencie and soundness in the Matter, as is not in any like composition easily to be matcht. As for the Introduction, it naturally carries us to all the circumstances of our Admission into the Church. Shewing when,

when, by whom, after what manner, and by what means we became Christians. Next, it acquaints us with the great Priviledges, Benefits, and Duties of Christianity, as also how by Solemn Vow we stand obliged to perform them. The Question is *plain* and *short*; the Answer full and *pithy*. And the Compilers thereof have manifested a singular wisdom and care, in delivering the Rule in the fewest and plainest words. For if they had loaden it with long indicative Periods, they might at once have both puzzl'd the understanding, and oppressed the memory of those tender Capacities for whom chiefly it was designed.

If we look into the principal Chapters of the Catechism, the Church therein has followed the

the copy of the best and ancientest Catechists: For like them, she hath reduced to four General Heads all that is truly necessary to Salvation. For retrenching what is but artificially necessary to acquire the felicity of the future state, all truly necessary thereunto, is reduceable, 1. To Faith, or things to be believed. 2. To Obedience, or things to be done. 3. To Prayer, or things to be received. 4. To Sacraments, or things to admit and establish us in the Church.

As for the things we are to Believe, they are summ'd in Twelve Articles, bearing the name of the *Apostles Creed*, because it was either of their composing, or contains the substance of all which they taught to be necessary for *single Belief*; and was collected by Apostolical men

men, out of their Writings, into this Form or Breviary that we now profeſs.

As for Obedience, the Decalogue is its Rule and Object, which compriſeth a pure draught of practical Duties.

Prayer, which makes another head of the Catechiſm, is an auxiliary to the two former; for unleſs we beg and obtain the Divine Aſſiſtance, we can neither believe nor obey as we ought.--- *Know this, that thou art not able to do theſe things of thy ſelf, nor to walk in the Commandments of God without his ſpecical Grace, which thou muſt learn at all times to call for by diligent Prayer.* And the moſt abſolute Form and Pattern of this Duty, is that which Chriſt collected when he reformed their *Encholegus*, out of the Traditions of the Elders,

Elders, and recommended to his Church, and which bears his Name, *The Lords Prayer.*

The Sacraments are the fourth Head of Catechism, which God ordained in compliance with mans infirmities and weakness. For being that those things which concern the *Endless Welfare* of the Rational Soul, are like it self of Spiritual and Divine Nature, and therefore not easily to be comprehended by those who have their Understanding limited by their senses; it pleased God to appoint certain *Holy Rites* called Sacraments, which by outward and visible Signes represent unto us that inward and spiritual Grace which he bestows upon us; and which are also means whereby we are partakers of that Grace, and pledges to assure us of that participation.

Chap. XV.

An account of some Objections usually brought against the Church-Catechism.

It hath been generally observed, That Zeal, if it be not soberly governed when it striveth against any thing, that either in reality or but appearance, opposeth Religion, doth usually proceed with so great impetuousness, that Religion it self is in danger. And as it not seldom falls out, That an over-eager desire to pluck up weeds, doth hazard the extirpation of the good grain; so a sinister zeal against what is superstitious, or but so pre-

pretended to be, doth often put both the Truth & practice of Religion into suspence and debate. And although this is an Observation which might be easily attested through all the *Periods* of the Church, yet we need not look so far back for testimony thereof, if we revolve what has happened among our selves within the Annals of our *Memory*. For we have seen the malice of the *Detracting spirit of* Faction and Sedition exposing every Institute of the Church to contradiction and reproach. Accounting it Argument enough to abandon every thing used by the Church, on which there could any way be fasten'd the odious names of *Popish* and *Superstitious*.

And though this might be exemplified through the whole Body of the *Churches Lyturgy*, yet the

the preſent Theme obliges me to remark only ſuch Cavils as with greater ſpecíouſneſs are brought againſt the Catechiſm. For as for other exceptions, the ſmalneſs of their importance renders very needleſs to return them any ſolid anſwer.

Now the firſt thing objected againſt the Catechiſm, reſpects its two firſt Queſtions, which are traduced as ſuperfluous and trifling, as being to no more purpoſe, than to aſk what we know already, and to be informed of that which we perfectly underſtood before: Seeing that uſually falls out, that the Catechiſt is well acquainted with the Catechumens name, and all the circumſtances of its impoſition. Now ſeeing that Catechiſm is pretended to be an Abridgement, and that all know how it is the proper

proper duty of Abridgements to leave out nothing necessary, and so take nothing unnecessary in; the *Church-Catechism* will be far from deserving the name of an Abridgement, if its very entrance, or any thing therein be Trivial and Redundant.

But this Objection will appear of small force and importance, when it is considered, that the Church in her Catechism observes the Method which is natural to Discourses fram'd by Question and Answer, whose entrance is ever some familiar Interrogative agreeable to the matter which is to be discoursed. And seeing that the Church in her Catechism designed to instruct the ignorant and younger sort the Principles of that Religion which they profess, it was very proper to begin her Instruction with

with an enquiry for that Name in which they first undertook that Profession.

And in this respect our Publike Catechism is more apposite and genuine, than either the *Roman Catechism* established by Pope *Clement* the Eighth, or that of *Geneva* annexed to their Lyturgy: for after a long Preamble, the one begins with, *Quidnam Doctrina Christiana?* The other with, *Quelle est la Principale fin de la Vie humaine?*

But the entrance of our Church-Catechism will be further vindicated from the imputation of *levity* or *superfluousness*, when it is rightly considered That it doth naturally guide the Catechized to the knowledge of what most nearly import him. For (as 'twere by the hand) it gently carries him to

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all the concerning circumstances of his admission into the Church; by whom; at what time; and after what manner, he was made a Member of Christ, or received into the Congregation of his Flock, and had a right conferr'd upon him to partake of all the Promises and Priviledges of the New Covenant. Baptism being an inauguration into that Religious Society which Christ founded.

And as we read that the people of God have from the beginning had Names of special signification (as *Adam*, *Chava*, *Abram*, &c.) whereby they were put in mind of some signal mark of Gods Providence toward them, and of their bounden duty of being piously thankful: So the Catechized when he is demanded the Name in which he became a Chri-

Christian, it minds him of his obligation, 1. To depart from iniquity, and thereby to walk worthy of that Name by which he is called. 2. To perform what in that Name he vowed and promised. 3. To examine his proficiencie in that Religion into which by this name he was first initiate. 4. To express a thankful remembrance of Christs singular favour, that he so far condescended, as to call him after his own Name.

But the Catechumen may upon another account be first called upon for his name, because it is the badge and cognizance of that Holy Religion in which he is to be instructed, and of which he must give an account both to God and his Church, now and at the last. And superseding all other Reasons, those that have been

been thus briefly intimated, may (at least) assist to clear the first Question and Answer of the Catechism from the guilt of Trivialness, vanity and impertinencie.

As to what is objected against the second Question and Answer, it will be sufficient to Reply, That our Church therein is conformable to the Primitive. For *Tertullian* (a Father of the third Age) saith positively, That it was the custom of the Church in his time, to admit none to the benefit of the Scriptures, or to any dispensation concerning Sacred and Divine things, or to the scanning and examination of particular Questions of Religion, who could not first give a clear account of all material circumstances of their Reception into the Ark of Christ's Church. By whom, at what time,

time, and after what manner they were received (which are the Ingredients of the second Answer in the Church-Catechism) and whether they did stedfastly believe and maintain all those general Principles, wherein there ever was an Universal and Unanimous agreement among all Christians. And those who could not give an account thereof were looked upon as such who had no right to the Communion of Christ's Church, and the Priviledges of his Kingdom. This Testimony of the Churches practice is to be seen in *Tertullian's Præsc. adverſ. Hæretic.* A piece which was written by him, as I conceive, before the provocation of the *Roman* Clergy tempted him to turn a *Montaniſt*, & to be led away with the Enthuſiaſtic Deluſions of that Sect. He lived

n the third Age, and was so high n the esteem of the humble and nodest St. *Cyprian*, that he usu-lly called him his *Master. Hie-om. in Cat. Script. Eccles. Abra-am Buchol. Chronolog.*

The imposition of the Name eing confined to the precise time f Baptism, is by some looked pon as an impertinent rigor, nd tasting highly of Superstiti-n. But they would be of an o-her mind, if without prejudice ney would have recourse to the *Use* of the Church, which hath lways given Names to those hildren she admitted into her ellowship, at the punctual time f their admission. And this vill be plainly discerned, if we ook back unto Circumcision (the rst Characteristical Sacrament) r from the time of its Institu-ion, to that of its legal aboliſh-

ment, the Male received his name at the celebration of that truly primitive Initiatory.

Nor doth it any way evacuate this Assertion, that we read of some who had names before they were circumcised (after that admissory Rite was apppointed) as *Benoni*, *Gershom*, and the Israelites born in the Wilderness; whom we may suppose not to have wanted Names, as they did Circumcision. But as touching the example of *Benoni*, it affords little of Objection, seeing that at Circumcision his Name was changed. And what happen'd concerning *Gershom*, it was as the instance of the Israelites in the Desart, in this case not at all Argumentative, because it was extraordinary, and when necessity forced them to dispense with

Gen. 35. 18. Exod. 2. & 4. Josh. 5. 2.

Law

Law. So that notwithstanding all this, we may conclude that Circumcision was the usual time for the imposition of names. And the like custom has always been observed at Christian Baptism; the Church thinking it most convenient that the Baptized should at the same time receive his Christen name, whereat he became a Christian.

But that for which the Church seems least accountable, and which makes the greatest noise, and which is objected with the fairest plausibility, is that which concerns Sureties in Baptism, whose Office is decri'd as unwarrantable, because they undertake what they cannot discharge. And the very name (of Godfathers and Godmothers) is spoken against, as a prophanation of the most Holy Name, being a

transgression of the third Commandment. And this is an Objection which cannot be better assoiled, than by laying down a clear Scheme of the Antiquity and Reasonableness of Sureties in Baptism.

And in the first place, the Antiquity of Sureties, at and for the reception of Persons into the Church, is indisputable. For if we look into the Jewish Church when she was in her best purity, we shall find, that ever since the institution of Circumcision there were still some appointed to be present, and hold out the Male to the *Mohel* to be circumcised. And the person allotted for this Office, was some special friend of the Fathers, who is called the Master of the Covenant (but usually in Latin, *Initiationis Arbiter*, *Susceptor*, *Compater*

ter) who at the Door of the Synagogue receives the child from the women, who are permitted to go further; and entring the Synagogue, the *Susceptor* holds the child till the *Hammohel*, Circumciser, has taken away the foreskin. And how this custom was primitively observed among the Jews, and in point of Sureties derived to the Christians, may be collected from what *Junius* has intimated upon *Esay* 8. compared with St. *Luke* 1. from the 57 to the 60 *Verse*.

Now this custom of Sureties in the Jewish Church, need not at all reflect upon the like in the Christian. Being it was in the power of the later to retain any Rite of the former that was apparently decent, significant, and edifying. For if every thing used by the Jew were to be rejected

by the Christian, then most of our Religion must be cast out of doors. For it was not the designe of our great Law-giver to abolish Judaism, but to amend, supply, and heighten it. Besides, we find not that those who were, or are the greatest impugners, and most impetuons gainsayers of Sureties in Baptism, ever did it upon the account that it was a rag of Judaism.

But how dark and questionable this custom may seem to some in its derivation and pedegree, yet its practice is clearly to be found in the first times of Christianity. As they must needs know who have observed how frequently σύνπικοι and Ἀνάδοχοι occur in the Greek Fathers; and *Susceptores*, *Sponsores*, and *Fidejussores*, in the Latin. And how in both, the words signifie and refer

refer to *Undertakers* at Baptism. *Platina* ascribes the Institution hereof unto *Hygin*, who, saith he, ordain'd, that at the least one *Patrimus* or *Matria* should be present at Baptism, and there hold the Infant till he was baptized. *Patrimus* and *Matrima* are old words, which by new imposition denoted those who *Undertook* for the Vertuous and pious education of the Baptized.

Now, if it be granted, that *Hygin* Bishop of *Rome* was the Author of Godfathers and Godmothers, then this Custom is of an uncontroulable Ancientness. For *Hygin* lived in the Second Age, and was a Martyr in the 144 of Salvation. And it is generally granted, that this good Bishop took occasion from those Persecutions which were heavy upon the Church, to appoint

Sureties in Baptism. That in case the Parents should fall into violent restraint, banishment, or death, there might be some to take care of their childrens instruction in the truth of that Religion into which they were initiate.

But whatever was the first occasion or ground of this Suretiship, we are certain that for its great standing in the Church, it may take place among those Primitive Rites, which were in all descending Ages to be retained. And this will appear from the very nature and reason of the thing it self. And a custom or Law, though it cannot be elder, yet it may safely be supposed to be as old as its chief motive and reason.

Now the neareſt Method to prove the reasonableness of this

custom

cuſtom of Baptiſmal Sureties is to examine both what they do for the child at the inſtant of his Baptiſm, and what they undertake for him for the future.

And as to what the Sureties do for the child at the time he receives this Sacrament; *Platina* tells us, that was no more than to hold it in their arms till it was baptized, and to give it a name according, or at leaſt not contrary to the Parents directions. And this is a thing ſo harmleſs, that none can have any colour to quarrel or reject it.

And as for what the Sureties undertake in the childs ſtead for the future, it can merit no juſt reprehenſion; ſeeing it is no more than to be careful that the child be vertuouſly brought up to lead a Godly and a Chriſtian life, and be taught ſuch things as are ne-

ceſſary to the attainment of Eternal happineſs: according to the exhortation of the Office of publike Baptiſm. And to the end that this might not be over-burthenſom to the Sureties, the Church provides that her Curates ſhall diligently teach whom ſhe has baptized; and ſo to inſtruct them, that they may be fit for Confirmation. At which time the Sureties are diſcharged of their bands, becauſe at Confirmation the Baptized anſwer and underake in their own names, what their Sureties have done in their ſtead.

But it may ſtill be replied, That the Parents are fitteſt to engage for their children, and that ſo weighty a concernment ought not to be transferr'd unto ſtrangers. I muſt confeſs, this was once my own Perſwaſion; out of which I could

could not argue my self, till I consider'd, 1. That by the Law both of God and Nature, Parents are obliged to instruct their children in the things of God; and therefore need not to enter into bonds. 2. That Parents may die before their children arrive to a capacity of being instructed; or they may be ignorant and unable, or negligent and careless to instruct them. 3. That the Parents may be corrupted with Schism and Heresie, and by reason thereof be altogether unfit to perform this Office. And indeed, if we reflect upon the temperament of the Age we live in, the Church may seem never to have had more need of Sureties for their Orthodox instruction, whom she takes into her Communion. For so many Parents are infatuated with erronious Opinions,

Opinions, that none are more improper to engage for the regular Catechism of their children than themselves. And if there were none of these Reasons herein argumentative, yet the thing it self is of so great importance, that the Church hath ever thought it insecure to have none bound but the Parents. And there are, who upon no contemptible account, esteem it very incongruous, that those should present the child to be washt of that pollution which it derived from them. And upon this score it might be, that the father was wont not to be admitted to be present at the Baptism of his child, but stood at the Church-door while the infant was carried in and baptized.

Zanchius, who was well read in the Writings of the Antient Fathers of the Church, speaking of

of this custom of Godfathers and Godmothers in his Commentaries upon the *Ephesians*, assures of its Antiquity; that it opposeth no period of Holy Writ; that it is an effect of the Parents love and care to their children thus to make all possible provision for their Religious institution: That it is beneficial for the Infant in case of the Parents death, and an assistance to the Parents if they live: That it is a means to beget and increase mutual kindness among Neighbours; because hereby a spiritual alliance is contracted, which may greatly conduce to the propagation and maintenance of Christian charity. And we may add to all this, that not a few children would inevitably be debarr'd of Holy Baptism, if none but their Parents could be admitted thereunto to present

preſent them, and to ſtipulate in their names.

But it is in the next place ſtrongly objected againſt what is vowed by the Sureties in behalf of the Baptized, as alſo that it looks very contrary to the nature of a Vow for one to make it in behalf of another. And here not to meddle with the nature of Vows in General, nor particularly of that of Baptiſm; it may ſufficiently evacuate all Scruples, plainly to conſider, that no more is done in this Baptiſmal Suretiſhip, than is both done and approved in Secular affairs, in wch it is allowed that Infants act by their Tutors, Proxies and Guardians, and that too in matters of no ſmaller concernment than Eſpouſals and Eſtates, *&c.* and at a time when they are as uncapable to underſtand

ſtand and perform what is undertaken in their Names, as here at Baptiſm. It has alſo been ever thought both juſt and reaſonable for debtors to procure others to be bound with them for payment of that for which at preſent they are inſufficient. And we may ſafely ſuppoſe that God will be as merciful in ſuch caſes, as our ſelves; and that he will as readily accept of Sureties for the Chriſtian Education of an Innocent Infant, as we for an inſufficient Debtor.

But for a more evident comprehenſion of the whole caſe, I conceive it may be thus ſtated. At the Font when the Infant is brought to Holy Baptiſm, the Sureties put on his perſon, and ſubſtitute themſelves into his place: they repreſent his voice, and anſwer in his ſtead. [All which

which is to be seen in the Demands and Answers in the Administration of publike Baptism of Infants to be used in the Church.] And the Infant engageth under this personation, that when he comes to years, he will perform the Vow and Promise thus made by his Substitutes. He and they being by interpretation but as one person; and therefore the Infant, when grown up, is as much bound to discharge what at Baptism was promised in his Name, as if he had done it himself. Now by this substitution the Sureties perform a great act of Charity: for they do that for the child, which by no means he could do for him himself; for they get him an early interest in the priviledges of Christianity, which in the ordinary way of procedure, cannot be had without

out Baptism: and this cannot be had without making the Vow thereof; and it is impossible for the Infant to make this Vow, but by its Proxies; who oblige themselves no further, than to see that the *Infant be taught so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn Vow, Promise and Profession he has made by his Substitutes*, or Sureties.

And by this short account of what the Godfathers and Godmothers do for the Infant in Baptism, it is easie to apprehend that none need withdraw from this pious work, for the supposed difficulty of its discharge. And therefore those who rightly understand this Suretiship, and yet refuse it, they may be thought rather to want Charity than Power; and that they are unwilling, and not unable to perform it.

Nor

Nor doth it less reflect upon their deportment, who turn this pious Custom into an idle Ceremony, by privately devolving upon the Parents, what they publikely undertook for their children; which doth at once frustrate and contradict the intendment of the Church, and delude the Congregation of God's people.

But it may be further objected, That the Vow of Baptism being made by others, renders the performance and observation thereof by the *Child*, a thing of constraint, and not of election: for the baptized when grown up, doth not follow his own choice, but his Sureties; and allows of what was at Baptism promised in his behalf, not out of willingness but pre-ingagement; all which is opposite to the genuine

nuine nature of a Vow.

And in Anſwer to this Objection, it will be convenient to obſerve, That the Vow and Promiſe made by Sureties in Baptiſm is not abſolute; for in an ababſolute ſenſe, no man can undertake for another. But the Vow is conditional; and the child when come to age muſt either own it, or forfeit the benefits of Baptiſm. And as thoſe who are married being *Minors*, when come to mature years may chuſe whether the Marriage ſhall be ratified or reſcinded: So it is in the power of the Baptized at years of diſcretion, to acknowledge or renounce the Vow of Baptiſm. If he allow of, and conſent to what at holy Baptiſm was vowed in his name (which is ſtill ſuppoſed at the making of the Vow) then he is bound

bound actually to believe and do it. But if he disclaim it (which is in his power) then he disowns all Interest and Priviledge in Christ, with all the benefits of that Society into which by Baptism he became incorporate.

The Catechism teacheth us out of the Creed, to believe, That God the Son hath redeemed all mankinde; which cannot be true (say many) because he died only for the Elect. But they would have no reason to impugn the Churches Doctrine in this particular, if those Scriptures were impartially considered by them, whereon this Position is founded. A few of which are here barely quoted in the Margin, on purpose to shew the ground of the Churches Doctrine, and to guide

Ezek. 18.23, 32.
S. Joh. 3.16.
Heb. 2.9.
Rom. 1.4 5.
S. Joh. 4.42.
1 *Tim.* 4 10.
S. Joh. 1.7.
2 *S. Pet.* 3.9.

guide those to the Topicks of their confutation, who gainsay this, *I believe in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankinde.* That his death was both sufficient and intentional to save all mankinde, but is effectual and efficacious for none but *true Believers*, is a distinction which being wisely and soberly understood, would remove that clashing, which some fancie there is, betwixt the Catechism and the Seventeenth Article of the Church.

Many other Scruples brought against this *excellent Catechism* are purposely omitted, because they will easily be obviated in its (intended) Exposition. Besides, I have bound my self to observe the *Laws* of an Essay; which I must unavoidably violate, if I should venture upon all such

such Enlargements as the Subject would naturally endure. I had rather be censured for having said too little than too much.

Deus dedit his quoq; finem.

The

The Conclusion.

WE have hitherto examin'd the Age and Advantages of Catechizing, and found it to stand above the imputation of being either Novel or Superfluous. So that the only remaining enquiry concerns its Practice. And this will exact no long disquisition, seeing every Station of men are therein so perfunctory and negligent. Now as in a common Contagion no less care must be had of the sound than infirm; and the cure of single persons is required to the removal of the Epidemical Disease: So remissness in Catechizing

chizing being become a common Malady, it behoves every one to look after amendment, to the end that the Church may be healed of all those Distempers, faln upon her through lack of Catechizing, and which if not prevented with a timely interposition thereof, will effect that destruction which they threaten and prognosticate.

And if we look into the persons who are capable herein to be delinquent, they may be reduced either to such as the Church has ordained to administer, or receive this Sovereign Medicine. The former are the Clergy in the whole denomination; for he among them who excepts, deceives both himself and the Church. And notwithstanding that the Clergy in *Sacred Writ* bear divers appellations

ions importing the Dignity, Power, Holineſs, Excellencie, Care, Tenderneſs, Diſcretion and Incommunity of their Functions; yet there is no Title wherein they are more concerned, than that of Catechiſt. For it doth (firſt) more immediately relate to that Errand on which from the beginning they were ſent into the world ---- *Go teach*, &c. And next, unto the want and ſupply of thoſe over whom God hath made them Overſeers. And while they own themſelves to be the Churches Miniſters, they ſhould take care to ſerve her in her own way. For ſince that was left for paths of their own, and more toyl and labour has been ſpent in *arguing*, than in *teaching* the Principles of Chriſtianity, it is ſadly viſible how Religion has thriven among us. For from endeavo-

ring to ſupport Chriſtianity with
buttreſſes of our own, captious
and malitious enemies take occa-
ſion to conclude that it cannot
ſtand without them. The ſu-
perſtructure ſeems to be the pro-
per matter of our care, where we
believe the Ground-work lies
immoveable. And bleſſed be the
Author and Finiſher of our
Faith, that he has founded it up-
on a Rock; and maketh it ſo
ſtrong, that the Gates of Hell,
the ſtrength and ſubtilty of her
greateſt Enemies can never be a-
ble to prevail againſt it. Were
we to deal with open Adverſa-
ries of the Faith (Jew, Mahume-
tan, Pagan) the Ancient Fa-
thers have ſhewn us an excellent
way of procedure; but having
to do with Profeſſors, whoſe e-
vil manners have corrupted their
Underſtanding, not the proving
of

of the verity of the Christian Religion, but the enforcement of its Practice, seems to be the only necessary prescription.

But without being decisive, or stinting the spirit of any man, I hope it may be lawful to wish that the Clergy (out of a true sense of what they are enjoyn'd and bound to obey, by the 59th Canon) would return to the *good old way* of Catechizing: for since this was shoulder'd out by *Sermoning*, the people have been possessed with strange whimsies in Religion, and hurried on by the Spirit of Schism and Sedition into all manner of villanies.

A learned and pious Bishop of this Church doth (as I am told) in his own person and Cathedral perform this Office. A few such leading Examples would soon raise the sunk esteem of Catechi-

zing; and vindicate it from be
ing thought a drudgery fit onl
for Children and Curates. An
I humbly conjecture, that ther
is no Clergy-man need think
any leſſening of his *Greatneſs* an
Learning, to be ſeen teachin
God's people after the manner o
the Holy Apoſtles and Primitiv
Biſhops.

Our Anceſtors (who knev
ſomething as well as we) wer
not ignorant of the neceſſity an
benefit of what is now moſt af
fectionately recommended; whe
Queen *Elizabeth* made it he
44th Injunction, and King *Jame*
his Command, That afternoon
Lectures ſhould be converte
into Explanations of ſome neceſ
ſary Rudiments of the Cate
chiſm; out of a prudent fore-ſigh
that this would be more advan
tageous to the *people*, than ſom

c.

ex tempore irruptions, or enlarging a few contrived Breviates, upon desultory Texts.

The Laity are the next sort that herein can be faulty, to whose *attentive thoughts* I would most earnestly recommend, first, the serious perusal of the Rubrick adjoyned to the Catechism, together with the 59 Canon; Next, the examination of their knowledge in Religion; that by that former they may know their *Duty*; and by the later their want of being Catechized: And by both be induced to embrace what to their own damage and the Churches affliction they have indutifully neglected.

FINIS.

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